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THE

WAY OF THE WORLD.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE

WAY OF THE WORLD.

CHAPTER I.

"L'amour aussi bien que le feu, ne peut subsister sans un mouvement continuel; et il cesse de vivre dès qu'il cesse d'esperer ou de craindre."

De la Rochefoucauld.

The next day, as Miss Laurimer was sitting with her father and Altamont, a letter was brought her from Lord William Neville, informing her that he was going to Newmarket for a fortnight, at the end of which time he hoped to be allowed to claim her promise,

which so many circumstances had concurred to prevent her fulfilling before. Emmeline presented the letter to her father with a trembling hand.

"Lord William might as well have said this as written it," said Mr. Laurimer.

"I am very glad that he wrote," said Emmeline.

"Here he is," said her father. Emmeline knew the knock, and longed to escape. At no time would she have felt inclined to listen to his pathetic adieus, and in Altamont's presence, it was dreadful. Lord William entered gaily, gave the news of the day with his accustomed liveliness, and, taking Emmeline's hand, he led her to a window, and in a low voice repeated the contents of his letter. Strong emotion shook the frame of the embarrassed girl, as, with downcast looks, she listened to his arguments in favour of their

speedy union. Not that she heard a word that he addressed to her, although she guessed his meaning; it was the eye of Altamont she trembled to meet. She shuddered as her preference thus appeared confessed; but Emmeline's mind was strong, as well as her feelings; she could overcome *herself*. Lord William was dismissed well satisfied, and when he left them, Miss Laurimer requested an audience of her father; for he had retired to his study, that he might not, by his presence, restrain her conversation with Lord William Neville. It was instantly granted, and Emmeline, after having recapitulated all she owed to Lord William, and dwelt with pleasure on the many proofs she had received of his generosity, delicacy, and good-nature, proceeded to say, their marriage was fixed as that day fortnight, if Mr. Laurimer had no particular objection.

"I can have none, my dear child," he replied affectionately, "but what regards you. If you really wish to marry Lord William, (as until the other day, I concluded you did,) the sooner the ceremony takes place the better."

"Well, then," said Emmeline, taking up a pen that lay on the table, "I will write instantly to Lord William to settle the business finally." Having sealed and sent her note, she turned to her father, and in an altered voice, and with forced composure of manner said, "now, my dear sir, I have a favour to ask of you, that you will perhaps think extraordinary. I wish not to see Mr. Altamont until I am married."

"You shall not," said Mr. Laurimer, whose keen penetration quickly discerned her reasons; "but I had rather try to recall your note. Altamont loves you. But yesterday he asked me if your engagement with Lord William

Neville was irrevocable. You would have more than my sanction to marry him. It would be fulfilling my earnest wish if you were to accept the friend of my Albert. Him in whose arms he died!" Mr. Laurimer paused, too deeply affected by painful recollections to observe the emotion of his daughter, who, pale and breathless, leaned against the table for support.

"Well, Emmeline," he asked, after a momentary silence, "what do you say?"

"That Mr. Altamont's opinion or sentiments of me do not alter the case. I am engaged to Lord William Neville; voluntarily engaged, for I liked and esteemed him. I have had no cause to alter my opinion, therefore my engagement is unchanged."

"Arguing it as a point of duty," observed Mr. Laurimer, "I am not clear that you are

behaving well even to him. You marry him and you love another: is this fair?"

"I have, indeed, learnt," said Emmeline, in a low quick voice, "that I do not love Lord William, but I do not dislike him. I wish to avoid Mr. Altamont, because I find that he engrosses more of my thoughts than, considering my engagements, is right; but I do not love him, and if I did I would conquer my love. I am now happy and protected, and cannot refuse a man who would have married me when I was in great affliction and without one friend on whose help I could rely. I am bound by every possible tie to Lord William. He thinks I shall contribute to his happiness, and it shall be my earnest endeavour to realize that opinion." Emmeline's voice declined as she concluded, and, totally exhausted, she sank back in her chair, and closed her eyes.

Her deadly paleness alarmed her father, but she presently recovered, and with a languid smile re-assured him. They spent some further time in conversation, and Mr. Laurimer at last yielded to the opinions of his daughter, much as her conduct surprised him. Emmeline possessed all the sensibility and vivid enthusiasm of her father, but her feelings were better regulated, and her nature less impetuous. Every painful sentiment, therefore, that opposed her union with Lord William Neville she studiously repressed; sedulously endeavouring to find pleasure in that conduct which a sense of justice pointed out to her as the only right one. She felt that her task was no easy one, but she likewise felt she should ultimately succeed. The vision of Altamont appeared like a bright and dazzling meteor in a darkened sky; but it lay not within her road, and she stopped not to gaze at it. She saw

him no more, and had sufficient firmness not to inquire under what pretext he had given up their society. She was one day reading over some letters of Lord William Neville's, with the intention of answering them, when Lord Redhurst called with an epistle from his sister, Lady Sophia. It diverted Emmeline, and she gave it to her cousin, who read it aloud.

" From Lady Sophia Daverout to Miss Laurimer.

" Heath Cottage, near Bromley, Kent.

" Well, my dear Emmeline, and so I am married at last, you see! and without mamma knowing a word about it! Do you know that was the greatest fun of all, to think how they would look every where for me, and never find me! You, who are a reasonable, grave person, won't enter into all the amusement of running away to be married, when nobody would have

prevented my marrying at home; but I assure you it is vastly diverting. The weather was so beautiful! the horses went so quick! and I was so happy not to see my new governess's square face, or my mother's frowns; to say nothing of Redhurst, who always looks like the knight of the woeful countenance. Well, I managed to live with all those people comfortably enough, for I never minded wry faces, luckily for me, and besides was so accustomed to it, at last I never saw it. I hope, my dear cousin, when you marry Lord William Neville, (by the way what a time you make him linger) your clergyman won't be in a wig. I do assure you I never heard a word of the service, my parson's wig was so droll! In the first place there were more curls on one side than on the other, and besides it was put on awry. I did all I could not to laugh, for Henry looked

so grave, and once or twice sighed so deeply, it made me shiver to hear him. Do you know that, good natured and delightful as he is, he can scold? and what is most wonderful, I can't help minding him. I am sure I never used to mind scoldings, although I got plenty of them; but then I knew the tone so well that I never listened, the moment they began. Henry is very seldom merry—I think he ought to have married you instead of me. I told him so the other day; and instead of laughing, as I expected he would, he looked as if he was just going to have a tooth drawn. I told him I saw he did not care as much for me as he did for you and your severe father, (who terrifies me always out of my wits,) and what do you think he said, 'I should be very *ungrateful* if I did not love you better than any one'—a pretty gallant speech truly, thought I to myself, but I

suppose wives must not expect compliments from their husbands; however, I did feel a little cross, but Henry kissed me, and I could not be angry then, you know.

"We have a pretty cottage, and the drawing room is very gay, with three Venetian windows that don't shut close, and a pretty marble mantel-piece, that is meant to be in the middle of the room; but I measured the other day, and it is not exact by half an inch. What I like best in the house, is a rug in my room, that is worked with so strange a pattern, that sometimes I see armies in it, sometimes people's faces, sometimes palaces and Chinese temples; and in short any thing but a border of flowers, which Henry says it is. I have seen you in it very often—I hope it will not be long before I see you in reality, for I have asked my neighbours all the questions I could think of; and having nothing else to do, am

dying to get back to London, before the gay season is quite over.

"Ever your affectionate cousin,

"SOPHIA DAVEROUT."

"I should not be much flattered," observed Lord Redhurst with a smile, "if my wife was thus anxious to exchange the romantic pleasures of love and a cottage, for the unsentimental amusements of London."

"We must take people as we find them," replied Emmeline, "without wondering that no one person is the counterpart of another. Variety constitutes half our pleasures. The variety of nature is always delightful; that of character is no less interesting."

"By your rule," replied Lord Redhurst, "I must admire an ugly woman as much as a beauty, because she contributes to this said fascinating variety."

"You will not admire the ugly woman for herself, but you will find the beauty of others contrasted, and consequently heightened by her presence. With what immoveable listlessness have I seen you gaze on a bevy of females, any one of which might have been pretty and diverting by herself; but they failed to interest you, bécause they presented but one uniform mass. They were all alike: a fashionable education, and a fashionable dress had moulded them to the same pattern, and they looked but like so many fair copies of the same model."

"I am willing to allow," returned Lord Redhurst, "there is nothing so fatigueing as this eternal sameness; but to please, variety alone will not do; it must be different sorts of beauty, not a simple mixture of what is lovely and disagreeable."

"I cannot agree with you," said Emmeline.

"All sweets must be insipid, and all beauty exhausts the faculty of admiration. If out of your flower garden you would root every plant that does not individually please you, you would find the general effect tame and bad. The eye and the mind equally require some relief. What is so refreshing, so delightful as verdure? and yet to break one continued line of green, we should look with pleasure even on a ploughed field."

Redhurst laughed. "Who would have thought," said he, "that there could be any analogy between my sister and a ploughed field! you must allow we have wandered from the subject."

"In some degree I admit we have," continued Emmeline, "for I have been anxious to defend variety merely as such; I certainly do not pay Lady Sophia so bad a compliment, as to say she has no other merit than being diffe-

rent from most people. She is very young, and therefore may be allowed to be very giddy; but she is good tempered, and kind hearted, whatever her brother may say——"

"I," interrupted Redhurst, "I say nothing, but that I am very glad she is my sister, instead of my wife."

Emmeline smiled, and shortly after he took his leave.

The next day as Miss Laurimer was sitting alone, the newspaper was brought in. She took it up carelessly, but was immediately attracted by the name of the Duke of Wellingborough, and rapidly perused the following paragraph.—"It is with extreme regret we have to present our readers with the distressing intelligence of the death of his Grace the Duke of Wellingborough, Baron de Laval, Viscount Tiverton, &c. &c. This amiable nobleman left home in perfect health in the morn-

ing, but having been thrown by his horse, was brought back senseless to his distracted family. He expired in a few hours. The life of his unhappy widow is despaired of. The title and great part of the estates will go to his Grace's brother, Lord William Neville." The paper dropt from Emmeline's hands. For the first time in her life, self presented itself before any other consideration. She thought of the death of the Duke but as a means by which it might be possible to escape marrying Lord William. She felt that some of her bands were broken, but she had still many more which she knew not how to shake off.

"Emmeline!" said a voice behind her. She turned, and beheld Lord William.

"I did not think we should have met thus," said he, in an agitated voice. "My poor brother is no more. We can do nothing for *him*, but my unfortunate sister may yet be

saved. She is within six weeks of her lying-in, and this unexpected misfortune may be fatal to both her and the child. She is surrounded by medical people, but she has no female friend." He stopped, and looked earnestly at Emmeline, who burst into tears, struck with sudden remorse at her own selfishness, and admiration of the generosity of Lord William, who appeared so totally to forget that his sister's child would deprive him in all probability of the possessions he would otherwise inherit from the Duke of Wellingborough.

Mr. Laurimer entered, and his daughter asked permission to attend the Duchess. It was readily granted; but neither the skill of the physician, nor the attention of her nurse, could save the young widow. She died, and the infant to whom she gave birth survived his mother but a few days.

Lord William was not a person to rejoice at his new honours, even if they had been acquired by less disastrous means. As it was, he felt that an only brother and steady friend was no slight loss, and vehement as he generally was in all his wishes, he had never felt more anxiety on any occasion of his life then he now did for the recovery of a sister-in-law, whom he did not love. It was not on any principle of individual regard that he was thus interested in the health of the Duchess: Lord William rarely acted on principle of any sort. It was the mere impulse of affection to his brother, and respect for his memory that excited the earnest wish of saving all who belonged to him, all whom he had loved. In his wild and volatile character there was an inherent generosity neither consolidated by reflection nor adorned by sensibility; on which no one could venture to rely, because he was

unstable; but from which he never deviated, because to do so would have been to change his nature. Emmeline was delighted with the amiable light in which he now appeared, and felt angry with herself at what she termed her unjust partiality to Altamont. Because he was devoid of sentiment; in short, because he had not the same cast of character with herself, she had judged him incapable of constant persevering kindness and attention. She now saw the contrary, and bitterly condemning the rashness of her former opinions, formed equally rash ones of a contrary nature. Anxious to repair the wrong she had in her own mind done him, she sought every opportunity of pleasing him by the most winning gentleness and marked deference.

Lord William was at first extremely flattered; gradually he grew accustomed to the change, and visibly relaxed in the excessive

attentions he had formerly paid to her who now seemed ready to court him. When the race is run and the prize obtained, it is frequently thrown by as valueless, although every nerve has been strained to obtain it. This was not entirely the case with the new duke; Emmeline was by no means valueless in his eyes: he admired and loved her, but the charm of novelty, the excitement supplied by resistance was over. Equally sure of her hand and her heart, he was at rest; and the repose of the passions is a dangerous crisis. Whether again affection will kindle, and rise to a milder but more certain flame, or whether it will droop and stagnate for ever, who shall say?——

The family vault received the remains of the late Duke of Wellingborough, his wife, and infant child; while his little girl, scarcely a year old, was placed by her uncle in the cottage of her nurse, until his marriage should enable

him to receive her into his own family. Two days after the funeral, the present duke repaired to a friend's house to endeavour to shake off the unusual gloom that oppressed him, and his friend, alarmed at his sadness, anxiously sought by every means in his power to dissipate his mind and prevent his dwelling on the past. Meanwhile Miss Laurimer, having beheld the young and the beautiful descend into the grave, from which they had thought themselves so remote, paid the tribute of tears to them, and of a sigh to mortal nature; then quickly banishing from her thought, people for whom she was no otherwise interested, returned to her former employments and usual cheerfulness.

Lady Sophia had returned to town, and now insisted on taking Emmeline to a masquerade that she was going to. Miss Laurimer liked the diversion, but rather shrank from the idea

of having so giddy a *chaperon* as her cousin. However, Sir Henry re-assured her by promising to accompany them; and as neither of them wished to be at the trouble of supporting characters, they wore plain dominos. Lady Sophia, who could neither prevail upon herself to conceal her dancing or her dress, chose a costume which it would have been difficult properly to refer to any particular nation, but which fully answered the purpose for which it was adopted, because it was extremely splendid.

The evening from which so much amusement was expected, at last arrived, and the fête was as expensively got up, and therefore as delightful as any thing could be. The house itself was magnificent, and the gardens were thrown open for the reception of the guests. To these Emmeline quickly retired, delighted with the tasteful arrangement of coloured lamps among the trees, and overcome with the heat

of the apartments to which the freshness of the night air was an agreeable contrast. Here she was, by accident, separated from Sir Henry Daverout, and passed some minutes in sauntering through the crowded place to look for him. At length she saw a figure in a domino, so much like his, that she felt convinced she could not be mistaken; and darting forward, she seized his arm, saying, in her natural voice, "I was afraid I had lost you, and how I could have found my way to the carriage alone, I know not."

The mask pressed her hand in silence, and led her towards the door. Her cousin's carriage had drawn up and was easily found. Her conductor placed her in it, and drew away.

"Are you going back, Sir Henry?" asked the surprised Emmeline. The domino unmasked, and throwing back his cowl, Miss

Laurimer beheld, by the glare of the flambeaux, the countenance of Altamont!

"Farewell!" said he, emphatically, and mingled in the crowd. Emmeline gazed in vain. She saw him no more.

"How could you find the carriage?" said her astonished friends, when they joined her. "I do not know," she articulated, with difficulty.

"Good heavens, Emmeline!" asked Lady Sophia, "what is the matter?—are you ill?—are you terrified?—Have you seen any one?"

"Yes—no—I am not sure," she replied, feebly endeavouring to withdraw her cold and trembling hand from her cousin's grasp.

Lady Sophia continued rapidly to ask questions and frame conjectures aloud, without gaining any information from the bewildered Emmeline, in whose ears the "Farewell" of

Altamont rang too distinctly to admit of any other sound.

When she reached her own room, she threw herself into the first chair; her faculties benumbed, and her mind oppressed too much to reflect or to lament. A vague idea of suffering kept her from totally sinking into insensibility. Gradually and slowly her feelings, wound up as it were by enchantment, awoke, and clasping her hands she exclaimed, sorrowfully—"I have seen him for the last time," and a sensation of despair excited her tears. They relieved her, and retiring to rest, she arose on the following day, scarce able to believe that the appearance of Altamont had been real, and shocked to think it had had power to affect her so strongly.

CHAPTER II.

"La philosophie triomphe aisément des maux passés, et des maux à venir; mais les maux présents triomphent d'elle."

DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULD.

FOR the third time, the day was fixed that was to see Miss Laurimer the wife of the Duke of Wellingborough. Emmeline sighed and wished it over. Her courage had long been kept on the stretch, and she feared another respite might make it fail. Her spirit was well nigh exhausted, and her cheerless epistles were answered laconically by the Duke. Indeed his letters grew every day shorter and colder. Engrossed with her own thoughts, Miss Laurimer

heeded it not, but gradually fell into the same style herself. She was at last induced to remark the change, by her father's somewhat angrily observing, that the Duke must have very weighty business that could detain him in the country until the very day before his wedding. Emmeline's heart beat quick as the faint gleam of hope crossed her that he repented his engagements. She wrote to beg to see him immediately. He was but sixty miles from town, and obeyed her summons without delay. With what anxiety did she await this interview that was to decide her fate! Yet she felt how much self-control was necessary to penetrate his feelings and conceal her own. She received him with her usual kindness, which his evident embarrassment rather increased, as it confirmed her hopes. Fearful of reviving his former affection by tender reproaches, she talked of his alteration in the

light tone of raillery: assured him that an engagement of so long standing as ours had as good a right to tire as marriage itself: that his love for her, which originated in compassion, (for she wisely sunk his flaming declaration in the lifetime of Lady Maddalena,) naturally expired with the cause that gave it birth.

The Duke was astonished and confounded, perhaps a little piqued, at the idea that he could so readily be given up, and replied—"I see you have been listening to idle rumours, and, supposing yourself unappreciated, seize with delight the opportunity of breaking with a man you never loved."

"Had it been my intention to break engagements I voluntarily entered into, occasions might have been found or made ere this," returned Emmeline; "but you are witness that, during the whole period of our engagement, not the faintest attempt on my part could have

led you to imagine such was my wish. My friendship for you, founded on your excellent qualities, will remain the same, whether I become your wife or not. My gratitude will be in full force while I have memory. My reasons for consenting to our union, you well know, were the wish to prove *that* gratitude, and the idea, that, as you loved me, I should be contributing to your happiness by marrying you. Had that idea remained in full force, this conversation would never have taken place, nor should I have written to request it."

The Duke interrupted her with professions of everlasting affection, but his expressions, although as violent as formerly, failed to convince. Perhaps, had his auditor felt inclined to be convinced, they might have exercised their wonted efficacy; but this was not the case, and Emmeline smiled incredulously. The Duke suddenly stopped, struck

with the contrast she exhibited to the present idol of his imagination. The rumours to which he alluded were *not* illusions. Without being actually in love, he had suffered himself to be very much interested for a lady, who was at no pains to conceal her admiration of him. Besides, the plain truth was, he had seen so much of Emmeline, and thought so much of her, that he began to talk to her and of her without the slightest emotion. Still he wished to marry her: first, because he was engaged to her, and secondly, because he had an inclination to marry, and had met with no one of whom he had so high an opinion as Miss Laurimer. He had reached the limits of affection—indolent admiration and inactive regard: he would, therefore, have borne any delays to their marriage with uncommon patience, but he did not feel prepared to give her up entirely. True, however, to his innate generosity, he no sooner

suspected that Emmeline, in accepting him, had calculated his happiness alone, and that in fact she was not in love with him, than he declared her to be at perfect liberty; and after a protracted conversation, which was doubtless more interesting to them than it could possibly be to the reader, they parted on the mere footing of friends.

Miss Laurimer's heart bounded with joy, as, flying to her father and embracing him, she exclaimed—"I am free!" and if the Duke of Wellingborough gave a few sighs to the dissolution of an engagement he had entered into with rapture, and adhered to with pleasure, still no real regret darkened his lively countenance, no imaginary sentimental woe induced him to mourn in "elegant distress" over an event more unexpected than painful.

To Lord Redhurst these transactions appeared in the highest degree wonderful. That

any body could give up Emmeline Laurimer, who once had expected to call her his, was to her cousin perfectly incomprehensible; yet the same smiles decked his friend's intelligent and open face, the same sparkling wit shone in his conversation, the same air of thoughtless hilarity reigned in his unaltered manners. Lord Redhurst gazed and marvelled, but feeling that if he expressed an opinion it must convey an imputation of censure upon some one, he gazed and marvelled in silence.

Mr. Laurimer, who rejoiced in the breaking off with the Duke, only because he wished Altamont to replace him, now made diligent inquiries after this young man. But he was no where to be found. He had left town the night after the masquerade, whither he had gone to take a last look of Emmeline, and no one had seen him since.

All thought of Altamont was, however, for

the present suspended by an accident that materially changed the face of affairs in the family of Laurimer. Lady De Verney, who had never sought to gain any influence over the minds of her children, nevertheless expected to rule them as despotically at all ages, as she had done in the period of their infancy. Lady Sophia, happy to escape from her mother's control, had no idea of again submitting to it; yet too good natured to wish to torment her, she would have avoided all subject of contention if she could have given herself time to reflect, but we have seen that reflection was not her *forte*. Lady De Verney had never been in the habit of restraining her anger before her daughter, and her daughter had long ceased to be annoyed by it; but Sir Henry, who was accidentally witness to one of these scenes, did not take it so quietly. He instantly carried his wife away, and assured his mother-in-

law that she should not see her daughter again until she could converse more temperately.

Lady De Verney boiling with rage, broke from them, and entering her husband's study, bewailed the ill-treatment she had received from Sir Henry, in the most pathetic terms. Whether his Lordship felt stronger for this boldness of Sir Henry, or whether he really was inspired with one of those sudden courageous impulses which the most timid have sometimes experienced, is uncertain, but with little of that submissive air he usually wore, he answered calmly, "I don't wonder at it, my dear; Sir Henry is not a man to be trifled with." Astonishment so far subdued Lady De Verney's passion, as to prevent its choking her. Turning to Lord Redhurst, as if wanting support, and yet being too proud to ask it, she said, incoherently——

"And you too, Frederick, will doubtless

justify this conduct of Sir Henry's, this base desertion of Sophia's ?"

"I, madam ? I justify nobody," said Redhurst, listlessly, continuing the perusal of the book that lay before him on the table.

Lady De Verney caught it up, and dashed it with violence to the end of the room. "Is this the manner in which you hear me ? Ungrateful boy !" she exclaimed, her eyes darting fire, and her whole frame trembling convulsively. The word ungrateful sounded so strangely in her mouth, that Lord Redhurst looked up, intending to make some pacifying reply. Lady De Verney clasped her hands with violence, and instantly sunk on the floor. Her husband and son were alarmed. They raised her, and it was presently discovered that she had ruptured a blood-vessel.

Lady Sophia did not hear of this accident for some days after it had occurred, and was

then informed by Emmeline, that any, the slightest agitation, might produce a relapse, and therefore that she had better not come to her mother until Lady De Verney herself expressed a wish to see her; that at present she could not speak, but was calm and tractable. Indeed, the fear of death had completely subdued her, and her docility was as wonderful as unexpected. Lady Sophia was sorry to hear her mother suffered; glad to think Emmeline was there to nurse her, and rejoiced to be out of the way. Her brother promised to give her accounts of Lady De Verney, and to recall her when he judged it expedient, and Lady Sophia tripped gaily into the carriage that was to take her a tour to the lakes; and before they reached the second mile stone, had equally forgotten the anger and the illness of her mother. Miss Laurimer, established for the second time in her uncle's house, marked with dismay the

ravages which sickness had made on the fine features of her aunt. Long and painful was her struggle with death, and when at last the vigour of her constitution appeared to have conquered, a paralytic stroke annihilated her newly recovered strength, and the blooming and elegant Countess sank into the helpless and emaciated cripple. Neglected by those whom she could no longer amuse, deserted by her daughter, avoided by a husband who rejoiced in his newly acquired liberty, Lady De Verney found herself dependant on people she had scorned, not for amusement merely, but for indispensable and daily comfort. Lord Redhurst forced himself to pay her the attentions her situation demanded, and every day at the same hour came to inquire after her health, and to enliven her confinement by his conversation. Lady De Verney, now rendered keen sighted to the feelings of others by a

sense of helplessness, fancied she perceived that he counted the minutes devoted to a peevish invalid, and listened to her complaints with a languid attention. Whatever faults his manner might present, no one was answerable for them but herself. What as a child he might have been, his mother could not judge, the nursery being the last place she had ever thought of visiting.

The natural benevolence of Frederick Laurimer induced him to see more of his sister-in-law than he had ever done before; but attention or neglect both carried a pang to the heart of the sufferer: the latter had taught her that she owed the former solely to compassion, and her pride shrunk from the conviction.

"I am astonished," said Redhurst, one day to his cousin, "that you can give up so much time to my mother, who appears never to have an interval of patience."

"How should she?" replied Emmeline. "She has lost every thing, and what has she to support her? Nothing."

"I don't quite understand you," said Lord Redhurst. "Her pleasures are undoubtedly curtailed, if not annihilated, but to repine at what is inevitable is folly. She is a very sensible woman, and mere common sense would teach us to submit to misfortunes when we cannot avoid them."

"I hope," rejoined Emmeline smiling, "that you will find some sounder philosophy to comfort *you* whenever you may need it under all the chances and changes of this mortal life. It would not have that effect on me. If the thunderbolt of Heaven was to fall on my devoted head, the reflection that the hand that wielded it was mightier than mine would not prevent my sinking under it. The conviction,

indeed, that *that* hand cannot err, that it is His will that I should suffer, and that He willeth all things right, would be an ineffable consolation. As feeble mortals we shrink from pain; it is only as Christians that we can endure it joyfully."

"I believe you and Altamont between you will convert me to your beautiful but incomprehensible system," said Lord Redhurst, smiling. "I received a letter from him yesterday, which would do for a sermon any day. As that is your turn, you shall have it to study."

Emmeline's eyes flashed, but she did not trust herself to speak, and her cousin continued, "You have proved in your way why my mother is not likely to be resigned to her fate, but you have not proved why you are to bear with her."

"Because there is nobody else to bear with her, as you call it," replied Emmeline, with simplicity.

"You are a very wonderful person," rejoined Lord Redhurst warmly. "Perhaps you don't know that there is such a vice in the world as selfishness."

"On the contrary," replied Emmeline, "I know that we are *all* selfish; the cottager, perhaps, less so than the conqueror; the Christian certainly less so than the man of the world, or even than the philosopher. But, in this instance, there is no room for selfishness. To endeavour to comfort those who have no other comfort is surely no effort of generosity. We are all obnoxious to sorrow; every sufferer, therefore, has claims on his neighbour as such, without any reference to the divine laws, which order us 'to weep with those that weep, and

rejoice with those that do rejoice.' There can be no merit in doing what we could not omit with common decency. I am performing a simple duty, which, at the same time, gives me the pleasure of being useful, and I do not see how it could possibly be otherwise."

This, thought Lord Redhurst, as he pressed his cousin's hand, is doing well gracefully—he might have added, *religiously ;* but Lord Redhurst had thought of religion only as the observation of certain ceremonies at certain periods, not as the main spring of our actions, the guide of our feelings, and the word, consequently, did not present itself.

Lady De Verney's health being in some measure restored, Emmeline departed to her father's house. On her arrival there she was not a little surprised to be handed out of the carriage by Charles Altamont.

"Since when have you been in town?" she asked, with mingled pleasure and embarrassment.

"A few hours only," he replied, "and, I confess, however ungallant you may deem me, my first care was to seek Mr. Laurimer. I can only offer, as some excuse for such conduct, my extreme anxiety to ascertain the truth of a most astonishing piece of intelligence. The Duke of Wellingborough was married yesterday."

"I am very glad of it," said Emmeline with eagerness; then blushing deeply at her own *naïveté*, she added, "his Grace and I are old friends, you know, and to hear of his happiness will at all times give me pleasure."

"I rejoice to find," said Altamont archly, "that happiness and matrimony are synonymous terms with you."

"The Duke sought his own pleasure in

marrying, I conclude," replied Emmeline coldly, "that for the present he is happy. What he may be in future I pretend not to say, because, I think, that in the married state in general, numerous instances show there are certainly chances of misery as well as of great happiness."

Altamont felt she was not pleased, but the sudden revolution in his prospects, and his late conversation with Mr. Laurimer, had so far elated him, that he could not contrive to be sorry at any thing. "How I wish you would scold me," said he, with a look of lively tenderness. "You do not know all the good the very sound of your voice does me, after having thought I should never hear it again."

"Were you intending to travel shortly?" asked Emmeline, avoiding his eyes, the expression of which embarrassed her.

"Travel?" repeated Altamont, as a mo-

mentary cloud passed his brow. "No, I have done with travelling."

He rose to depart. His spirits had received a sudden check by the recollection of all those he had lost abroad, and he felt it the more keenly just at the moment when his horizon was brightening. The instant he was gone, Emmeline felt only that she had vexed him, and longed to see him again, which she expected firmly to do at dinner. Dinner, however, came, but no Altamont. Mr. Laurimer spoke little; and as soon as the cloth was removed, quitted the room, having, as he said, business with a lawyer. Left alone, Miss Laurimer went in search of the letter Redhurst had sent her, written by Altamont. She read it over and over again with an enthusiasm which rose to rapture when she considered who it was that had so expressed himself. In every

line shone the well-bred gentleman, the profound scholar, the sincere Christian. Union rare and beautiful! No cant, no rigidity debased the religion of Altamont. It was pure as the first breath of morning, gentle as the dews of heaven. Emmeline's heart swelled as if to contain so much excellence. Her tears flowed, but they were the tears of affection and admiration. She was in the midst of the most delicious dreams that can delight the human heart. The elevation of those we love, when the door opened and Altamont himself stood before her.

It is singular that where people have a great deal to say, or nothing at all, they are generally equally embarrassed and taciturn. Emmeline's enthusiasm was wound up to so high a pitch that she would gladly have thrown her self at Altamont's feet, yet she bowed to him in stately silence.

"That letter, I hope," he observed, anxiously, "contains no mournful intelligence."

"Any thing but mournful," replied Emmeline, with a smile, holding it out to him. He glanced across it, recognised his letter to Redhurst, and the subject on which it was written, and felt for how many sorrows that one moment compensated! He was approved at once by the heart and the judgment of his mistress, and he saw he had attained the happiness for which he would have made any sacrifice."

"My children," said Mr. Laurimer, who shortly joined them, "I am tired of seeing marriages put off; yours, therefore, shall take place to-morrow."

"Oh, my dear father, not to-morrow," said the surprised and agitated Emmeline.

"And why not?" replied her smiling fa-

ther, "you have had a very long time to consider about matrimony, and, if you cannot decide now, I shall begin to suspect you never will. Come, I must have my own way this once. To-morrow is a very good day, as fit to be married in as any other day in the week; and if it should turn out to have been an unlucky one, you may say, with the Roman general, "From this time forward it shall no longer be called so, I will make it the most fortunate in the calendar."

Emmeline smiled at the delight expressed in her father's countenance, and gaily told him she did not approve of his looking happier than herself at her wedding; it was so like rejoicing to get rid of her. The next day Miss Laurimer was married, and Lord Redhurst, when the ceremony was over, whispered her:

"So, my grave cousin turns out at last to be a very romantic girl. All you meant by your wise harangues against matrimony coming simply to this—I am not in love with Lord William Neville."

THE VINDICATION.

"Beware what earth calls happiness."

YOUNG.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

The following pages are no fiction of the brain; and the unfortunate beings whose history they record, did once exist, though they are now at peace.

I was the friend of the Honourable Edward M——, and publish these memoirs as the only method of fulfilling his last request. Persons there are, still living, who will remember, should this work fall under their notice, the sad story, which was once so much talked of, the mystery of which is here fully explained, and the character of an injured person cleared from obloquy.

These memoirs were sent to me a short time ago with the following letter.

"To W. Jones, Esq.

"Dear Jones,

"The man you have so long thought dead, the friend of your youth, still lives: twenty years I have been dead to the world, and twenty years I have lived to myself and misery.

"Had my misfortunes been such as the power of friendship might have alleviated, you should not have remained in ignorance of my real fate; but my sorrows could find relief only in death, and I would not burden you with unavailing grief.

"I send you a short narration of the circumstance which disclosed to me the innocence of that sainted excellence whom I ever loved, and to whom my whole soul was de-

voted even at the moment that her seeming perfidy compelled me to cast her off for ever. Imagine, if you can, the horror and remorse that have beset me since I have discovered that she was as innocent as she was beautiful. Years of pain, and penitence, and sorrow have been unable to atone for the involuntary wrong I did to her excellence, or to reconcile me to the existence which one fatal step has embittered beyond the possibility of amelioration. May my sufferings prove the sincerity of my repentance, and the hardness of the trial to which I was exposed, procure my pardon! In trembling hope I now await the moment that is to reunite us.

"That moment is fast approaching, my body long harassed by suffering and sorrowing, gladly hails its release. When you receive these papers I shall be no more. I commit them to the care of a person, who

will not deliver them to you until after my death.

"To witness my last moments would be painful to you, and distressing to me. I therefore spare you the unavailing grief which I know you would feel.

"You were the friend of my youth.—If you ever loved me, grant my dying request.—To those who knew my Clara, who believed her guilty, make known her innocence. Let the world judge how much she was wronged. So shall I bless you in heaven!

"My dear friend, accept this adieu—this last final good-night!"

Such was the letter of the friend whom I had long since lamented as dead. I have changed nothing in his manuscript, but judged it most prudent to conceal the names. The narration is simple and earnest; no attempt

is apparent to excite, by eloquent pathos, the reader's sympathy for fictitious woes. The object of the writer was merely to discharge a task which justice and his own heart imperiously dictated; and he seems to have felt that this would be best effected by an unadorned relation of facts. Those facts are, however, so extraordinary, and so full of sorrow, that it may be doubted whether the imagination of poets ever suggested a picture of more heart-stirring suffering, the intensity of which is deepened by the innocence of the victim on whose head it was poured. A sadder history the world hardly ever saw, and it is not more sad than true.

Liverpool,
20th March, 1810.

THE VINDICATION.

A MELANCHOLY, hopeless wanderer I had visited all Europe, at different times, still seeking for that peace which ever eluded my grasp. Happiness was no longer within my reach, and I aspired not so high; but tranquillity my heart yearned after, and yearned in vain.

After an absence of eight years I returned to England. I revisited the beautiful lakes of Cumberland, on whose borders, in happier days, I had wandered with a beloved wife, who

then seemed to deserve all the affection I lavished on her—all the fondness which had made me think, in the intoxication of passion, that she was as far superior to the rest of her sex in virtue and truth, as she excelled them in beauty of person. The sight of beauties which we had admired together, could not recall her more forcibly to my mind; for her image was engraven on my heart in characters never to be effaced; but, strange to say, it afforded me some moments of pleasure,—moments when a lapse of mournful years faded from my view, and I remembered only the fleeting hours of happiness, and forgot the total ruin which all my joys had suffered. I dreamed over again the early visions of my soul, before disappointments, the bitterest and most withering that the human heart can experience, had fallen upon me, and made my existence a blank. Fancy restored me to that

position I had once occupied. I was in the enjoyment of health, wealth, youth—rich in the possession of valued friends, my mind full of elastic energy, drinking of enjoyment at full draughts, and each enjoyment was made a thousand times more sweet by the presence of that enchantress who was to me dearer than all the world beside, or than all that the world's joys could promise. I hugged the delusion and revelled in the intoxication which memory and my excited imagination shed over my soul. And then the spell was loosened—the fairy scene vanished—I woke to the agonizing pain of a crushed heart, ruined hopes, and pride that was degraded and extinguished. I cursed the existence which had become a torment to me, and prayed, with fervency—almost with despair—that it might terminate. I was tempted often and often to give up my hopes in the goodness of Provi-

dence, and to believe that I was the sport of some blind destiny by which human affairs were regulated without reference to the merit or demerit of human conduct. I recalled the actions of my past life; I found that some of the frailties to which youth and inexperience expose the best, had been committed by me; but my conscience was free from the stain of any notorious vice, which, in its consequences or by the poison of its example, might have deserved the penalties I suffered. At these moments my mind was in a state of hopeless darkness; but then the influence of religion, the calm and convincing precepts of that faith which teaches that the scenes of this world are mere passages of suffering which are to prepare the soul for a higher state of existence, aroused me from the despair that environed me. I bowed in humility and repentance before that power which knows and sees

all, and by whose dispensations the partial evils which exist are permitted only that they may work out their good and glorious whole which has been planned by His infinite wisdom. I thought of the sufferings of others, and learned that, although it was impossible to forget, it was my duty to bear my own. I learned, amid the solitary grandeurs of nature, the cause,

> "Why unassuming worth in secret lived,
> And died, neglected; why the good man's share
> In life was gall and bitterness of soul:
> Why the lone widow and her orphans pin'd
> In starving solitude, while luxury,
> In palaces, lay straining her low thought
> To form unreal wants; why heaven-born truth,
> And moderation fair, wore the red marks
> Of superstition's scourge; why licens'd pain,
> That cruel spoiler, that embosom'd foe,
> Embitter'd all our bliss."

After having seen all the beauties most

known and admired in Cumberland, I wandered through the mountains, and discovered others which appeared to have been rarely visited by any human footstep.

One evening, after having rambled many miles from any habitation, I arrived at a small lake, which had till then escaped my observation. Its romantic wildness excited my admiration: it was surrounded with luxurious woods fringing the water's edge, and hills crowned with frowning rocks, which, partly concealed by evening mists, shewed more softly mellowed in the glassy bosom of the lake: the sun was setting, and its beams gleamed upon a small village, half concealed in the trees, and which, from the wildness of its situation, appeared as though it could have had little communication with the rest of the world. It consisted of a few small cottages, all seeming to denote cleanliness and comfort.

The parson's house, situated on a little rising ground, overlooked the rest, and in its outward appearance betokened happiness and content. Alas! it did not accord with the nature of my feelings, and I turned to a sight more congenial, but which I had not till that moment remarked. It was the churchyard, overhung with yews and larches. The former planted near the graves, few of which were dignified with a stone, to record the names of the once breathing clay that filled their narrow confines. Under the largest of the yew trees, I remarked a recent stone, by which knelt a child of about eight years, who raised her humble adoration to the Deity in audible prayer. I stopped in silence by her, but she seemed unconscious of the presence of a stranger, till she had finished; and while I listened to the pious and innocent voice, I observed a young man, leaning against the tree, with his arms folded

in a pensive, musing attitude, and whose pale cheek seemed to bear the traces of sorrow more than sickness.

I stooped to read the inscription on the tablet—the words were—

Here repose the Remains of
CLARA.
Death, long wished for,
Has at length
Given her peace.

Somewhat lower were these words—

"Her soul is with the blessed in heaven,
and
Her memory is embalmed in the tears of the poor."

That name awoke the recollection of the sorrows I had struggled to master, and the whole train of half-dimmed agony and grief rushed over my soul. My tongue refused to utter it, although once it had been inseparably connected with all that I could conceive of joy and delight.—It was the name of my wife!—But

what a mournful contrast!—That unhappy woman was perhaps a miserable outcast on the face of the earth; or if death had put a period to her erring and unfortunate life, no tears would embalm her poor remains—no stone would bear the record of her guilty name—no child would lisp its evening prayer at her tomb.

Her own perhaps ere then, had learned to curse the author of its being.

I forgot that I was not alone, I hid my face in my hands, and groaned aloud.

The young man approached me, and enquired if I had known the person, whose grave seemed to cause me so much emotion.

"Alas! no," replied I, "but I did once know one of that name, and the dreadful difference of her character struck me to the heart. Let me now take the liberty of enquiring of you, who was this Clara, whose vir-

tues are so strongly expressed in those two lines; and why is her family name, contrary to custom, omitted.

"Her name," replied he, "is still unknown to me, though she lived six years in this parish: and even her history I was not made acquainted with, till after her death. She lived for some time in my father's house. Upon her first becoming an inmate there, she declined to adopt any other appellation than that which you see upon her tomb.

"'I might,' she said to my father, 'have imposed myself on you with a feigned name, but that I abhor falsehood.—If I must stoop to concealment, at least I will not be guilty of deceit. I have been deemed unworthy of bearing my own name, but I scorn to assume any other.'

"Thus did she prefer appearing in a suspicious light, to deceiving us, even in so trifling a

particular, and which she might have done without incurring the suspicion of blame. But she felt it was unworthy of her, and we knew it was unnecessary; her demeanour bore the indisputable marks of virtue and purity. It was impossible that so pious and charitable a mind, enshrined in a form of such angelic beauty could have had any thing to repent of, or to conceal on her own account, whatever effect the sins of others might have had upon her destiny. All who knew her, loved her, and we esteemed her, as much as if every one of her past actions had been known to us.

"We were not mistaken—her conduct during the six years she resided here, shewed her to be in reality the innocent and suffering being we afterwards found her to have been. This must be very uninteresting to you, sir, but I never can be brief on a subject, of which my heart is so full."

I replied that, far from intruding, he had interested me strongly in the history of his mysterious Clara; and that I should be much gratified in hearing farther particulars concerning her.

A strange and fearful suspicion had glanced across my mind: it was possible that the tenant of this humble tomb—the subject of this young man's warm and earnest encomium—might have been my deluded Clara. No one would conceal thus carefully their name, without some weighty reason—some dreadful and guilty reason, such as my unhappy wife had. True—when I had last heard of her, she was revelling in guilty pleasure at Paris, but might she not, since that time, have repented of her crimes?—might not shame and contrition have driven her to drag out the remnant of her days in those solitudes? I was lost in conjectures, but I resolved to leave no means neglected to

clear up my doubts; and with this resolution I arrived at the clergyman's house, where my young companion invited me to pass the night. It being then late, and the inn where I lodged more than eight miles off, I accepted the invitation, and entered the parson's modest dwelling, where I was welcomed by the old gentleman, with simple hospitality. After some indifferent conversation, I gradually led to the subject I had so much at heart, and he seemed scarcely less enthusiastic than his son, in praise of this unknown lady.

"She was a blessing to all the neighbouring poor," said he, "and long will they deplore her loss. As for myself, I can never cease to lament her, and this spot, where I have spent the greatest part of my life, is now become a dull solitude, since I have been deprived by death of my dear and amiable friend. From her I experienced all the kindness, attention,

and soothing cares of a daughter. Her society was my greatest comfort and pleasure; yet she was innocently the cause of the misery of a person, whom she wished well to; and it was not the least amongst her many subjects of grief, for she was the child of sorrow."

The son, who till that moment had sat listening to his father, now rushed out of the room, and I observed tears rolling in the old man's eyes.

"You must be surprised," said he, "to hear me speak to you, as if you were an old acquaintance; but age and sorrow have their privileges, one of which is to render us communicative, and there is a something in your countenance which tells me, that I am conversing with one who can sympathise with me, and who has felt misfortune himself."

"Too true," was all I could answer, and he thus continued:—

"I regretted deeply that my departed friend left me in ignorance of her name; not from a motive of idle curiosity, but as it deprived me of the power of proclaiming her innocence to a world, which had so fatally misjudged her, and of rescuing her name from undeserved reproach. But, alas! she no longer regarded the decisions of the world; though her body languished here below, her heart was set on things above. A fatal delusion had occasioned the death of a being, for whose sake alone life had charms for her; she sighed only to rejoin him in heaven, and looked without contempt, but with utter indifference, on the short-sighted judgments of blind mortals.

"I have to regret, that I discovered only when it was too late, that her virtues, her misfortunes, and her beauty, had made upon the heart of my son an impression, I fear, never to be effaced. Even my aged eyes rested with

delight on her beautiful and interesting countenance, saddened as it was with an eternal cloud of despondency, but never with a blush of guilty shame.

"It is, I confess, selfish to the highest degree, to regret her death; for her life, though it afforded happiness to others, was burdensome to herself; and time had no power to alleviate her sorrows. She died seven months ago, of an almost imperceptible decline. She expired," continued he in a faltering voice—"she expired, with the only gleam of joy I ever beheld on her features, and she resigned her being into the hands of Him who gave it, with pious satisfaction. To my care, she left, with her little cottage, an orphan whom she had adopted, and who now lives with me, an inheritor to the tender regard I bore her benefactress. My son loves to direct and improve her young mind, and he teaches her to offer up

her morning and evening prayers to heaven, at the tomb of that amiable woman, with religious care nourishing in her the remembrance of her more than parent. To-morrow you shall see her cottage, which is in the same state as when she died."

The entrance of their frugal evening repast interrupted the conversation, and we shortly after retired for the night.

The next morning I arose with the dawn, for the suspicion I had formed left me no repose; and as soon as the clergyman's son made his appearance, I begged of him to conduct me to Clara's cottage.

We passed by several houses, in all of which was to be observed a degree of order and cleanliness superior to what is generally to be seen among the peasantry. The cottage to which we were going, was half a mile from the village, at the foot of a lofty hill, wooded from the

summit down to the foot. A small green field, sloping to the water's edge, fronted the house, and lay between it and the lake.

The situation was beautiful and romantic to the highest degree, but very gloomy; and in reverting to my lately formed suspicions, I could not help thinking it impossible that my Clara could have so long supported the burthen of existence in this solitude, with no object to divert her mind from the contemplation of her past sins—no companion but her own guilty conscience.

No, it is impossible, thought I, as I entered the door of the humble cottage; I have been misled by a false hope, and she has not ended her days in peace, obscurity, and innocence.

Soon, however, was this opinion changed—we were ushered into a room, which had been used as a parlour, and was left in the same state as when that interesting woman retired

to the bed from which she never rose. There was something peculiarly saddening in the air of the chamber, which was arranged, as if expecting an inhabitant, yet looking as though it had been long abandoned by its former tenant. There was a sacred gloom in the darkened apartment. I looked at the writing desk till I could have fancied a being seated there; above it was a picture, and the picture was veiled with curtains of black crape. With a trembling hand I drew them aside, and my eyes fixed on a portrait never to be forgotten. It was that picture, in which my bust and that of my wife had been placed in the same frame. The head of a winged cherub was placed above, and the cherub was our child. The face of Clara was erased from the ivory, but it was fresh in my memory. I looked at it, but for a moment—past joys, and succeeding misery, rushed with distracting tumult through my mind; their

violence was not to be withstood, and with a groan of agony I sank into insensibility.

On recovering my senses, I was lying on a couch, in the same room, and the clergyman's son was anxiously attending me.

"Take me," said I, "from this scene of horrors, and do not let me breathe any longer in the contaminated dwelling of the most abandoned of her sex." I rose, and attempted to fly, but the weakness of a body broken down by sorrow, arrested my progress, and I again sank back, almost powerless.

The young man addressed me in a soothing tone, and entreated me to be composed—

"You are most fatally mistaken in your belief, with regard to the injured Clara," said he, "for I perceive that you have once had a dear interest in her welfare. I can prove to you, beyond doubt, her entire innocence; and when you are composed, I will give you to peruse

a manuscript which she left to my father, containing the history of her life."

"O God!" exclaimed I, "beware how you deceive me with false hopes; trifle not with my tortured feelings, for know that you are speaking to the husband of Clara M——: to that man, whose existence has been embittered beyond cure, by her dereliction. You have afforded me a faint though incomprehensible hope; it may restore me to comparative happiness; but if I am disappointed, I answer not for my reason. Delay not an instant, if you would preserve me from distraction."

Without answering, he flew to a small cabinet, which he unlocked, and taking the wished-for papers from a drawer, he presented them to me, entreating me to be calm, assuring me that I should find my Clara to have been innocent; and then left me to peruse them unrestrained.

When I unfolded the papers, I recognised, with indescribable feelings, the long-prized characters of my Clara. Eager as I was to examine the contents, I kissed the writing, and wept over it. At length, with agonies only to be conceived by those who have suffered the same species of misfortune as myself, I read the account of my wife's sufferings, such as I now send you, transcribed in her own words.

"To my only remaining friends, the companions of my last years—the Clergyman of this Parish, and his Son.

"My kind Friends!

"You have received, comforted, fostered, an unfortunate, who, from the mystery of her appearance, would, by too many, have been treated with scorn and neglect.

"You harboured me, when I was unknown to you; when misery had bowed me to the

earth; and the only requital I can make, is to prove to you, that your offices of kindness were not bestowed upon an unworthy object.

"Though blighted by calumny, and overpowered with ignominy, I suffer unjustly. The world has dealt harshly with me; but it is not from the judgment of the world that I appeal. It is from no hope to alleviate the pain I hourly endure; for habit has taught me patience, and a reliance upon the goodness and mercy of God has given me fortitude which I had thought, until the time of trial came, that I was incapable of. You have an unquestionable claim to my confidence; you have done me justice, without knowing how much I have suffered from the injustice of others. You believe that I am innocent, and it is a duty from which I will not shrink, to convince you that you have not thought incorrectly. That I am innocent,

let the simple, candid relation of my misfortunes, prove to you.

" If blessed spirits retain in heaven any portion of the feelings that actuated and inspired them upon earth, then shall I, while you peruse the sad tale of misfortunes which can then wound no more, look down from the abodes of peace, and rejoice with you that the memory of Clara is pure and unspotted in your thoughts.

" Who would not write with truth and impartiality, when they are so soon to leave this world of delusions? Doubt not then of the veracity of what I say; and when you have read my history, though you may sigh to think that there did exist so unfortunate a being as I, yet you must rejoice that her sufferings are over.—The anticipation of that future moment lightens the present to me, and the considera-

tion that my sighs will be soon hushed, alone gives me courage to undertake this narrative.

"I was nursed in the lap of prosperity; an only child, heiress to great wealth, idolized by both parents, I only left the fostering care of a tender mother, for the protection of a beloved husband.

"With such fair and flourishing hopes could I have expected the miserable fate that was to attend my riper years? O let every one be warned by my fate, who thinks that this world's happiness is unchangeable! Such was my mad opinion once; but if ever mortal was justifiable in such an one, it was myself. My happiness was centered in one being, and that being would have sacrificed his life to insure my felicity, had it been necessary.

"His silent image is before me, smiling on me, as he did, in the dawn of our bliss; but he

breathed his last in cursing my name!—Can I record the fatal chain of events, that led to this most disastrous fate?—Yes, for you, my friends, I will go through this heart-breaking task, and conquer the feelings that almost overwhelm me.

"Before I had ever seen my husband, his brother, Lord Y—— paid his addresses to me. He was a man, as different from Edward M—— in personal appearance, as in every quality of the heart and mind. Proud, haughty, and unprincipled, he had thrown a cloak over his vices on our first acquaintance, when he had conceived a passion for me, detestable in its nature, and fatal in its effect; in short, hateful like the wretch whom it inspired.

"Had I been alone the sufferer, religion would long ere now have calmed my resentment, and hushed my repinings; but a nobler

victim was the prey of a too successful perfidy, and each revolving day renews the memory of his unparalleled wrongs.

"I have wished that a timely repentance might save my persecutor from the wrath of his offended Maker; but, if I were to say that I have cancelled from my mind the recollection of what I have suffered, I should give myself a merit, that belongs not to me. But I am hurried away by my feelings, and forget that it is my history and not my thoughts that I am to write.—I will therefore strive not to be diffuse, and to repress the utterance of the thoughts that force themselves upon my mind.

"It was not till after I had formally rejected Lord Y———, that I beheld his brother Edward M———, whom I became acquainted with in London.—To the most manly and captivating beauty he added the most fascinating manners, and, what was far more precious to my heart,

the most amiable and excellent character.—Our souls were congenial, though I was his inferior in every thing else: our love was pure and mutual, and our hands were joined with our hearts at the altar.

"United to my beloved Edward, the chosen of my heart, our union approved by all my friends, with every worldly advantage, our happiness promised to be eternal, and I fondly imagined that nothing could shake its firm basis.

"My brother-in-law with rankling envy beheld our mutual felicity, and to destroy it became the first object of his life. He conceived the most deadly hatred against his unoffending brother, and he even felt that his mad and unrighteous passion for me was a humiliation, for which he determined to take a horrid and deadly vengeance.

"With the most studied care he concealed

his intentions: affected an increased affection for my Edward, and treated me with a tender respect. His generous and open-hearted brother, incapable himself of deceit, never suspected it in another, and gladly remarked Lord Y——'s increased regard, and reformed manners.

"The wily serpent, while the sight of our happiness tore his heart with rage and malignity, attempted not to undermine our peace by the arts of seduction; my character, and the love I bore to my Edward, put such a plan out of the question; but he watched with patient determination the moment at which he might securely strike the death-blow he had long aimed against our comfort.

"Ere I had attained my eighteenth year, a lovely boy crowned our union, and doubled all my joys. On him also did Lord Y—— lavish his treacherous caresses, and had he been his

own son, he could not have appeared more doatingly fond of him.

"Another year passed on in uninterrupted quiet and domestic happiness; when my husband was forced to leave me, his presence having been deemed absolutely necessary to settle some affairs in his Jamaica estate, which was the principal part of his property, and which had become entangled in litigation, by means of the dishonesty of the persons who had been entrusted with its management. Though his absence was to be short and was unavoidable, it appeared to me the greatest misfortune to be separated from him, and at such a fearful distance; but he would upon no account suffer me to accompany him, as the inconvenience of such a journey would have been much felt by me, being far advanced in pregnancy. Since our marriage I had never been divided for a single day from my Edward; judge then

what must have been my grief (and it was my first serious one,) at being separated from him by the wide Atlantic. He promised to return at the end of the year; I then thought I could not have survived such a long absence—alas! we never met again! While I have life, never can I forget that sad parting; our last embrace, the last expression of his countenance, in which fond love and manly sorrow struggled for pre-eminence. He tore himself from me in agonized silence. At the recollection of this scene, bitter and tender regrets overpower me—I am unable to proceed.

"The precaution of leaving me behind, proved but a useless one; distress of mind had the worst effect upon me; and the consolation I expected, from the infant who had cost me so much, was not granted me. From that time I tried to annihilate the present from my thoughts, and lived only upon the hopes of a

happy futurity. I remained in the country, never mixed with the world, and only saw occasionally my parents, and Lord Y——.

"This treacherous brother had cautiously avoided giving me by his conduct the slightest cause of suspicion, and he continued to behave with the same distance, and with as much respect as ever. Though I had never entirely conquered the antipathy I had felt for him in the commencement of our acquaintance, yet I began to tolerate him, out of consideration for the excessive regard he professed for my husband and my little boy, who was his godson, and he would often say, should also be his heir.

"I heard, by every opportunity from my beloved Edward, and each letter brought accounts of his health, and assurances of his unabated love for his Clara.

"A tedious year at length rolled away, and I received a letter intimating that within a month

after it reached England, I should have the happiness of being re-united to the best of husbands.

"At this welcome intelligence I was half distracted with joy, and anticipated with rapture the moment that was to re-unite us, never more to part; for I vowed that no consideration should ever induce me to consent to such another separation.

"I thought of the happiness we should again enjoy; I anticipated every word he would utter at our meeting—every look that would speak so eloquently to my heart; it appeared to me that I had never sufficiently prized the felicity I formerly enjoyed. Those who have suffered a painful absence from the being that was dearer to them a thousand times than life, can alone conceive my feelings!

"A few days before the time I expected to see my husband again, I received another letter

from La Rochelle, containing intelligence of a very different nature from the last. Edward acquainted me that he had been shipwrecked on the coast by Saintonge, close to La Rochelle, and that he and one sailor only were saved from the wreck. He had been thrown half dead on the rocks, and so much bruised, that he had been seized with a fever, and for three days had been given up by the physicians. The first moment of his recovery had been employed in writing to me, to entreat that I would join him immediately, as he would be incapable of travelling for a considerable time, and that the impatience he felt to see me, would much retard his recovery.

"He entreated therefore that I would proceed to La Rochelle immediately, under the protection of his brother; and that, on no account, I should leave my son behind.

"The wretch who plotted my ruin, the wick-

ed Lord Y——, was present when I received the fiat of my destiny, in that fatal paper, from which sprung all my misfortunes.

"He saw the anguish that was painted in my countenance, and, with fiend-like art, enquired, in a tone of commiseration, what it was that agitated me so strongly. I gave him the letter without being able to speak, and it was not till some minutes after, that a flood of tears came to my relief.

"The first words I uttered were to enquire, if Lord Y—— could attend me directly, and my returning faculties were employed in hastening our departure. My brother-in-law, who had expressed the greatest sympathy for my sufferings, seconded my eagerness, with indefatigable zeal.

"Three hours after the receipt of my husband's letter I was ready to throw myself into the jaws of destruction with blind credulity. I

left my native country—but it was to attend my beloved husband. I submitted myself to the care of his wicked brother;—but, with my innocent babe flying to his dying father, could I fear deceit or violence?

"I have heard of presentiments acting strongly upon the mind: but, alas! no such warnings were granted to me; as my foot crossed that threshold which I was never again to tread, no friendly voice bade me beware of treachery. The sorrow which, at any other moment, I should have felt, at leaving my favourite dwelling, the scene of all my happiness, was superseded by more serious grief. Before my eyes I constantly beheld my Edward on the bed of sickness, looking around in vain for his Clara who should have smoothed his pillow, and supported his drooping head.

"We travelled without stopping and at full speed, though too slow for my eagerness, and

arrived the next morning at sunrise, in Portsmouth.

"Contrary to my expectation Lord Y—— immediately procured a small vessel, to convey us to France. I wrote a hurried letter to my father, which I have reason to think Lord Y—— never sent; and within less than an hour after our arrival in the town, we were floating on the uncertain deep.

"My little George, whom I had hastily brought away without any attendant, appeared much fatigued with the rapidity of the journey; but sleep soon put an end to his little discomforts. Not so his unfortunate mother. Unsuspecting evil, I yet felt a nameless dread which till then I had not had time to remark. A gloom, for which I could not account, hung over my spirits: and terrors, which were then useless, goaded me with fearful, but vague warnings.

"Lord Y—— appeared surprised at my de-

jection, and did all in his power to remove it. The fiend! he well knew it was but a foretaste of the agonies I was to feel!

"A dreadful storm arose at mid-day, and for six hours we were tossed about with unabated violence. We were, I believe, in much danger, but a torpor of mind and body had seized me, and I was incapable of feeling alarm.

"Had I known the fate that awaited me, on my knees might I have supplicated of bounteous heaven to be swallowed up in the raging waves. But I was reserved for bitterer pangs—reserved to be a frightful example of the vicissitudes of fortune, fallen from the pinnacle of happiness and prosperity, to the blackest gulf of misery!

"After a tedious and dangerous passage, our vessel weathered the storm, and at sunrise we anchored in the port of Barfleur.

"From that place, after a very short repose,

we set out for La Rochelle, and every instant I became more uneasy, and impatient to arrive at the place of our destination.

"I continually entreated Lord Y—— to hurry our drivers, and he still answered me with a smile of triumph, (which I took for kindness,) that we should arrive in good time.

"After travelling night and day, we arrived the third evening at La Rochelle, and stopped at the inn to which my husband had directed me.

"When we were to alight, the eagerness of my haste, and the violence of my agitation, deprived me of voice or motion, but Lord Y—— enquired immediately for his brother.

"The person to whom he addressed himself, began, to my surprise, a long speech in German; when, unable to contain my impatience, I entreated Lord Y—— to tell me briefly what I was to expect.

"'Nothing but what is most favourable to my dear sister's wishes,' replied he; 'this man tells me that your husband having met with the most unwearied attention and tenderness here, rapidly recovered; but the physicians having deemed a little country air absolutely necessary for the restoration of his health, before he could undertake his journey, he is now residing at a pleasant farm-house about ten miles hence; and if you are sufficiently recovered from your fatigues, to-morrow, at an early hour, we can visit him.'

"Before the end of this speech I had jumped back into the carriage, and insisted upon proceeding without farther delay.

"It was in vain that Lord Y—— remonstrated against the folly of resuming my journey, harassed as I was with so many days of fatigue; he could not prevail with me to take a moment's rest, but, at his desire, I consented

to leave my little George, who was half dead with fatigue, under his care; being, he said, obliged to remain some hours in the town, to transact a little business for his brother.

"I listened to nothing else, but bidding the driver take the route to the forest, in which was situated the house I was going to, he set off at full gallop.

"For some time I was dragged along with considerable velocity, and the rapidity of the motion added to bodily fatigue, plunged me in a sort of listless apathy, in which I could not identify one clear idea, and in which my feelings were in a kind of indefinite condition—— yet I believe that joy preponderated.

"The cross roads we soon came to, were so extremely bad that our progress was considerably impeded; and then I began to waken to a consciousness of painful and uneasy thoughts; mingled with fear at being alone on an unfre-

quented road, at night, and in a strange country, but such selfish feelings were soon superseded by stronger ones; my impatience made me think every moment an age, and my ideas, rushing in rapid succession through my brain, made me imagine a thousand direful forebodings of my Edward at every foot of ground passed over.

"Still did the roads grow worse and worse; the carriage had entered the forest, and the darkness did not allow me to perceive any track. Frequently did I press my driver to hurry on, but he appeared sulky, and besides, declared that his horses were so much fatigued that it was doubtful whether they could get to their journey's end. I enquired if he was well acquainted with the farm—again and again he protested that he knew it perfectly well.

"At length, after having been three weary

hours on the road, we stopped at a low door. It was immediately opened by a woman, who uttered some words, as if of enquiry, in a language I did not understand. O, heaven, thought I, again this horrible German conjured up to torment me! What was to be done?—I could have wept with vexation. The driver, who was a native, understood her as little as I; but, on Lord Y——'s servant riding up, my embarrassment was relieved, as he had been often on the Continent, and understood German perfectly.

"While he declared the purport of my coming, in a few words, I leaped out of the carriage, and was preparing to rush past the hostess, whose immense bulk almost blocked up the doorway, when she seized me rudely by the arm, and stopped me, saying at the same time to the servant, who interpreted it to me, that it would kill the English gentleman

to see his wife, without being prepared for it.

"On learning her meaning, I became wholly passive, and suffered her to lead me into a small room on the ground floor, where, putting down a rushlight on the table, she left me to my own reflections—if reflection it could be called, which was merely a chaos of tumultuous feelings.

"I walked up and down the room, repeating, 'I shall see him, I shall embrace him!'—It still appeared to me, as a dream, and I felt incredulous of my happiness. I imagined every word that he would say, and in vain attempted to compose myself, and to argue myself into a calmer frame of mind. How my heart beat at the slightest noise, while I counted every step, that I fancied the woman would take from my husband's chamber to the one I was in.

"At length I heard her heavy tread, and my heart rose in tumultuous beatings—she entered, and I gasped for breath.

"'Come,' said I, 'let us go instantly.' I was asking her a thousand questions as I hurried her away, forgetting that she could not understand a word I said: but she looked in my face with phlegmatic calmness, and, I fancy, reading in it the very contrary expression from her own, she shook her head, and, as I advanced to the door, took my arm, put it within hers, and fairly imprisoned me, while, with provoking calmness and gravity, she felt for her keys. Going to a press, she took out a bottle of cordial, of which she gave me a few drops in water, saying at the same time, some words in a soothing tone. I felt that I stood in need of a restorative, so drank off the drops, and, at length, got the woman out of the room. She led me, still with her distracting slow pace,

along several passages, till we came to a door which she pointed to.

"My spirits were, by this time, worked up to the highest pitch of love, joy, and expectation —I flew to the door, opened it, and it closed upon me.

"I had emerged from almost total darkness to a blaze of light. For a moment I thought my eyes deceived me, and passing my hand across my forehead, looked again.

"I did not comprehend what I saw, but it was evident to me, that he whom I sought was not there. My heart sank, and I involuntarily groaned.

"I was awakened to consciousness by hearing Lord Y——'s voice; who inquired, in a gay tone, what ailed his charming sister?

"I looked around me—I beheld him seated at a table, covered with fruits and wines—his eyes sparkling with joy or intoxication, I know

not which. Fear, confusion, and surprise had almost bereft me of my senses; but collecting the little remainder of my strength, I contrived to ask, in a hurried tone, 'Where is my Edward?—where is my husband?'

"'He is here, charming Clara,' said Lord Y——, as he rose and took my hand. He led me to a chair, and I sank on it, almost deprived of sensation. The surprise I had met with, in not finding my husband, added to anxiety and fatigue, completely robbed me of all reflection; I had not power to ask a question, or to make a conjecture. I did not faint —I sat near Lord Y——: I knew he was there. Yet I neither spoke, moved, nor thought. I cannot clearly recollect what I experienced at that time, nor do I know how long I remained in that torpor.

"He still held my hand—I started on hearing

him again speak—I think I remember he said, 'I shall be the happiest of men.'

"I began now to recover my faculties, but I could not understand him. His eyes were fixed on my face with such a terrific, horrible expression, that my heart sickened, though I had no suspicions then. Unhappy wretch! I was as unsuspecting as a victim led crowned with garlands to sacrifice.

"Oh, that look, that look—it often follows me even now in the silence of night—dreadful remembrancer! The grave only can shut it out from my mental view. It gave me a true warning of what I was to experience.

"It was such as I could have figured in the countenance of the Evil One, as he triumphed over the perpetration of the crime 'which brought death into the world!'

"My thoughts began to return. I closed my

eyes, and attempted to arrange my ideas with tranquillity. For a moment, I regained strength and calmness, and spoke slowly, fearing my ideas should again wander.

"'Explain to me,' said I, 'why I do not see my Edward, and why you are here, when you said you were to remain all night at the town? Again I say, where is my husband?'

"'You see your husband before you,' replied he. I stared in stupid astonishment. He continued—'But Edward M—— you will never see again.'

"Instantaneously, I felt a sharp pang at my heart, and what followed I know not.

"The first moment of recollection that dawned on me, I awoke as if from a painful dream.—My bed was close to a window; I drew back the curtain, and beheld the sun just beginning to rise. The birds were singing. It was such a morning as could have called forth the spon-

taneous adoration of the heart. What a different effect it had upon me!

"The exhilarating and animated scene recalled my confused recollection.—'Why,' thought I, ere I remembered the full sum of my misery, 'why has that sun risen again to me?' I threw myself back on the bed, and covered up my head, as if, by shutting out the light, I could arrest the current of recollection. But it would not be—soon I remembered that I had been told of my husband's death, for so I understood Lord Y——, and all I had then retained of his words were those which had sounded the knell of my happiness—'You will see Edward M—— no more!'

"Unknowing what I did, I repeated these fatal words. I felt no curiosity to hear farther particulars. I made no conjecture, but I felt a weight of woe that absorbed every faculty.

"I believe I repeated these words aloud, for

the old woman, who I suppose had been sleeping on a chair, unobserved by me, started up, and ran out of the room.

"In a few moments she returned with Lord Y——. He had a terrified look as he approached the bed, and inquired after my health, saying—'You have been very ill, my dear Clara; you have been insensible six-and-thirty hours.' I heard him perfectly, but I felt not the least power or inclination to attempt an answer. He spoke to me for some time in a soothing tone of voice, but my memory does not retain what he then said. I could not enter into any discourse with him, and he left me in a few moments. During the whole day I uttered nothing but broken sentences, and I can as little remember the feelings I had at that time as I can describe my sufferings.

"Every now and then, I fell into an uneasy slumber for some moments, and constantly

started up, as if my calamity had come fresh upon me.

"I must have suffered severely, for I repeated constantly—'Will nobody take pity upon me? Will nobody kill me?'

"That I was totally incapable of reflection is the only excuse which can be offered for such frantic expressions. I groaned under the load of life, and, unknowing what I did, I prayed to be released.

"Long after this period, when reflecting upon different parts of my melancholy history, I have wondered what could have been Lord Y——'s motive for allowing me to continue in my mistake with regard to my husband. Probably, he might think the deep despair I laboured under, in the conviction of my Edward's death, would be less prejudicial to me than the frantic horror I should feel at knowing the truth.

"In the evening I was seized with a strong

desire to rise, and though reduced to the most deplorable state of weakness, nothing could prevent me from getting up and dressing myself. When that was done, I could not rest in my chamber. I would go instantly to Lord Y——, though I could not bear to ask him a single question. I was perfectly convinced that I should hear a repetition of those dreadful words which had almost annihilated me, yet I clung to a sort of delusion that hindered me from speaking of it, as if by that means I could prevent it from being a certainty. I paced backwards and forwards in the room for some time, but still I could get no peace. In vain I tried to fly from myself. I walked down stairs and into the garden. Lord Y—— still following me, I believe, but I hardly observed him.

"The sight of verdant trees, an unclouded

sky, a brilliant prospect, irritated my feelings. I returned to the house with more quickness than I had left it, and throwing myself on a chair, I cast myself on the ground, with a petulance not natural to me, saying—'I will die—I cannot bear this!'

"Lord Y—— began, I imagine, to fear that I should make away with myself; but ever astute, and fertile in resources, he devised a means to prevent it.

"Unobserved by me, he left the room, and a few moments after, feeling something cling round my neck, I looked, and beheld my poor little boy, whom I had not seen since my arrival at that detested house.

"Tears rushed from my eyes in torrents—I was as a different being. Never had I felt so wonderful a revolution. It was as if the weight of the whole earth had been lifted from my

heart. I pressed him in my arms—I held him as the anchor of hope—I clung to him as the drowning man clings to a solitary plank.

"Lord Y—— stood by; unmoved he saw my conflicting emotions; or, if his heart confessed a feeling, doubtless it was a pleasurable one. He beheld before him his helpless victim; she whose only crime had been to adore his brother—she whom he had precipitated from felicity to wretchedness—a poor young creature, pressing in her arms her innocent child, unconscious of its mother's woes. He saw, but he pitied not!

"At this meeting with my beloved child, all my faculties returned—horror and remorse for the frantic words I had uttered seized my heart; and, flying to my chamber, I sank on my knees, and supplicated for forgiveness of the past, with strength to bear the load of my mis-

fortunes. I earnestly prayed for composure and resignation to hear the dreadful explanation I was soon to require from my brother-in-law.

"I remained long in prayer, and so calmed was my mental storms, so hushed my repinings and agonies, that I felt as if my broken spirit had held communion with those of the blessed world above.

"I must pause here. My friends, revered and valued—you, who will peruse the tale of my wrongs and my sufferings, when I shall be beyond the reach alike of sympathy and of censure, let not my candid narrative, which the foregoing pages contain, weaken my claim to your esteem. Think on, and pity the frailty of human nature.

"Bitterly do I repent the stubbornness with which my heart bent to its first trial; and long

adversity has now taught me to kiss the chastening rod. Impiously did I arraign heaven's justice—impiously did I repine—daringly did I call on death—I sought not for strength from that source, whence strength alone is given.

"But I had never known other sorrows than those of childhood, which makes its own imaginary woes. I had shed no tears but those which are 'forgot as soon as shed,' and I was at once plunged into the deepest gulf of human misery at the moment when I expected all of happiness this world can give. Those who have experienced the dreadful transition from transport to despair, will rather pity than sternly blame me. I was stunned and maddened with the blow, but my soul was not hardened.

"With a heart miserably lacerated, but a spirit resigned, and a calmness, the effect of

fervent prayer, I again encountered Lord Y——, and begged that he would recount to me the particulars of my husband's death, and allow me the sad consolation of viewing the spot of earth wherein all my joys were buried.

"He seemed astonished at my calmness.

"'I am happy,' said he, 'to see that you have in some measure regained your composure, and that you are in a frame of mind suitable to the conversation we are about to enter on. But, ere I commence, I must be very certain that you are indeed armed with fortitude, and that you will not break out into any violent excesses either of joy or grief.'

"'You may speak,' replied I; 'I look for fortitude from its true giver, and it will not be denied me. I will live for this dear infant—Image of his father!—For him nothing is too hard to bear.'

"'Then listen to me,' said he, 'and promise that, whatever I say, you will not reply until I have ended.'

"'I solemnly promise,' replied I, 'that I will, upon no account whatsoever, interrupt you.'

"And I did listen to the end! I curbed my horror and indignation, nerved as I was with fortitude, while the abandoned and barbarous man revealed to me his too successful machinations. His words were as follows:—

"'You have promised to be calm and silent, Clara; and remember that your fatal beauty is the cause of your present fate.

"'Edward M—— is dead to you—dead to you for all eternity; but he lives to the world.

"'Know, that it was I, who wrote the letter, which lured you to these shores; I, whose existence has long been embittered by the scorn of an ungrateful woman. Now dart all

the fire of your eyes upon me. Lovely creature, I am but too well acquainted with their cold, stern expression. I have lived upon your frowns, I have doted upon your scorn too, too long to be scared from my purpose. My brother, for whom such smiles, such looks as would warm the dead, were reserved, is, by my decree, destined never more to behold them. You rejected me—you despised me—and I vowed vengeance.

"'Now is that sweet vengeance mine, and I will taste it in all its glory, heightening the sweets of love. Clara, how my soul feasted on your tears!—how adorable you looked in grief and agony! How sweetly did my eager gaze wander over that face unconscious of its powers! I, who hardly dared to raise an eye to your keen, penetrating glance, may now——Clara, you are mine for ever!'

"He smiled in ghastly triumph.

"Indignation had armed me with a cool firmness, which, upon recollection, I have been astonished at.

"I returned his daring gaze with the fixed beam of fierce, rebuking scorn;—his sunk in confusion under it.

"I rose,—'Have you said all?'—He nodded assent.

"'Tis now your turn to listen, as I have done. Unconscious, as I am myself, of deceit, I suspected it not in others. I have fallen blindly into your snares. Less artful wiles might have lured me thus far, but the united art and strength of all mankind could not lead me one step farther. I despise you as a wretch, for whom I can find no name. I hate you as the destroyer of my husband's peace, and I fear you not, because I trust in HIM, as my guard and avenger, who can mock your vile

project, and destroy all that your malice can devise.'

"My boasted courage had well nigh forsaken me, and I retreated to my chamber precipitately. But, ere I left the room, I heard the wretch say,—'Your heart is not so bold as your words, fair lady; a little storming, and all will be well.'

"When I was alone, I recapitulated all the events that had happened to me, and I could not recover from my astonishment and horror: yet was I so engrossed at the happy news, that my Edward was still alive that I enjoyed for some time comparative pleasure. On the other hand, when I thought of his arrival in England, and the grief he would suffer at my incomprehensible absence, I had well nigh given myself up to despair. Again the distracting thought of the detestable Lord Y——, and his odious

passion made my blood curdle with horror in my veins. To supplicate him for my release, appeared at once as fruitless as it would be humbling to me. I even felt myself contaminated by having spoken to him.

"But a lurking hope spoke comfort to my soul. It whispered that my beloved Edward would search all the earth for me, and our journey had been so public, that he would have no difficulty in tracing me thus far, and finding me, unless Lord Y—— suddenly and privately removed to another dwelling. This hope supported me through the agony of being under the same roof with that monster, and at the same time I determined to exert every invention to make my escape.

"From this period I resolved upon confining myself to my chamber, which, however, did not avail much, as Lord Y—— finding that I avoided him, insisted upon visiting me, and I

was forced to hear his odious and disgraceful professions of what he called love.

"In this miserable condition my only solace was the company of my little son; and though his unconscious gaiety often brought tears into my eyes, it was the only thing that lightened my hateful captivity.

"One week was given me to make up my mind to Lord Y——'s base proposals, and in case my decision did not coincide with his will, I was threatened with the worst extremities.

"With a spirit and courage adequate to the exigencies (for I had then much to live for,) I decided to feign for some time, and drag on my respite if possible, till some opportunity should present itself, to deliver me out of the fiend-like power of my persecutor. I forced myself to treat him with more outward forbearance, and never adverted in his presence to the sub-

ject nearest my heart. I saw his secret triumph, but he affected to be proportionably guarded, and maintained much ceremony, fearful of alarming me, and flattering himself that I was gradually coming round. It appears astonishing, that, knowing me as he did, he could for a moment have been deceived, and have imagined that I could have any feelings for him, but those of horror and detestation.

"I frequently begged to be permitted to walk out, but was always attended by my persecutor, notwithstanding which I made a point of narrowly examining the house and its environs, in order to discover how it was situated in regard to La Rochelle; but I found my attempts fruitless, as I had arrived at the farm in the night, and the forest was full of cross tracks. Not another house was to be seen, and the view was shut in by trees on every side.

"My whole thoughts were employed in devising means to make my escape, and engrossed with the idea, I had not so much leisure to indulge in sorrow.

"On the third morning after the dreadful explanation I had had with Lord Y——, as I was about to rise, I heard a gentle knock at the door, and before I had time to speak, it opened, and in rushed my favourite attendant. She flew to me, crying, 'My dear, dear lady! how ill you look! oh, how sadly changed! My master —how is he?'

"'O Lucy,' said I, bursting into tears, 'you do not, then, know my sad fate—you don't know how miserable a woman I am!'

"I then recounted to her the dreadful tale, which was more than once interrupted by her execrations of the perfidious Y——. She groaned, wept, raved at the monster, as she

called him, and prayed for heaven's judgments on his head; and then, turning to my sleeping infant, she wept over him.

"I felt much comfort on having this faithful creature near me, and inquired anxiously how she had found her way to that den of villainy, and how she had remained so long in ignorance of my real situation. She replied that Lord Y—— had left instructions with her when we quitted the country to follow the next day, accompanied by one of his own servants; and that having arrived at La Rochelle three days after us, Lord Y——'s valet de chambre had ridden over to this place, desiring her to remain where she was till she was sent for, which had only been done that morning.

"By this account I easily understood that my wily prosecutor, had pre-concerted to keep me in the most forlorn and unprotected state pos-

sible, in order to bow me to his will, and afterwards to recommend himself to me, by attending to my wants, and supplying me with every comfort he could think of.

"Little did my faithful Lucy expect to see me in this dreadful situation. But no sooner had she heard the particulars of my story, than, banishing all repinings and reflections on the past, she busied herself in devising means of escape.

"After much consultation, she at length asserted that she was positive of success, and that she would never rest till she had delivered me from my captivity. It was agreed between us that I should persevere in my feigned gentleness toward Lord Y——: that meanwhile Lucy should affect to be wholly engrossed with a love affair with his servant, and appear perfectly happy and contented. By this means

she would have liberty to go about unrestrained, and prepare the means of flight, should we ever have a chance of escaping from the house.

"The only way of effecting the latter was to procure the key of the house-door, and that Lucy engaged to do.

"She accordingly studiously sought the company of the valet of Lord Y——, who, having formerly made love to her, was eager to recommend himself to her good graces. She was continually walking or conversing with him, and always singing or laughing when Lord Y—— was within hearing.

"My part was to conquer my feelings, and to smile upon the destroyer of my peace.

"Complaining of the shortness of the respite he had given me, I entreated for a reprieve of a few days, adding, with an air of yielding reluctance, that, since I had no alternative, I

must make the best of my fate, and accompany him to some part of the continent, though I could not consent to return to England. It was with much difficulty I could utter words at once so hateful and so false, but I had no alternative; my whole happiness was at stake; and Lucy supported my spirits with the account of her successes.

"She had, at length, prevailed on her lover, David, to take her to a fair at La Rochelle, which she pretended to be childishly anxious to see. Having brought over with her, at Lord Y——'s desire, some of my best clothes and laces, her plan was to take with her as much as she could carry without suspicion, and, by selling them there, raise money enough to pay our journey back to England, if we ever could succeed in our projects of escape. The poor creature was indefatigable in my service,

and as anxious to succeed, as if she were working for herself.

"During the day previous to this intended jaunt, she employed herself in learning as many French words as she thought would be necessary to make herself understood. The moment before she was to set out, Lord Y—— came into my chamber, and, placing a large casket on the table, 'There, Clara, I have brought you comfort,' said he; 'I know that women must have shining baubles to divert themselves with.—There—bedeck yourself, and forget your imaginary sorrows.'

"Saying this he left the room with a satisfied air. 'Most fortunate, indeed,' cried Lucy, as she opened it, and showed me that he had brought me my jewels. She was already covered with articles that she was carrying away for sale, and I now loaded her fingers

with rings and her neck with chains, recommending her to hide them from observation; and she departed in great spirits.

"I was now left alone for the whole day, to the odious company of Lord Y——, who daily grew more detestable, though he affected to treat me with much delicate gallantry and consideration. I was, however, closely guarded, and not permitted to stir from the house without him or our hostess. I discovered at times, and by words he uttered, when wine had opened his heart, that he had bought the hateful house we were in, purposely to betray me: and that the people who inhabited it were vile, unprincipled wretches, that had formerly been partners in iniquity with him, and to whom he had given this farm, upon the base condition of their becoming his tools in this most disgraceful affair. As I looked back to the

whole system of iniquity, I could not help wondering at it. So artfully planned, and so fatally successful in every point.

"He had long meditated my misery, and no trouble, time, or expense had been spared.

"Late in the evening Lucy returned, and when we were alone, she gave me an elaborate description of her journey, and of her adventures in the town. After having gone to several shows, they had retired to a small inn to dine, where Mr. David became so intoxicated, that he fell into a deep sleep; she immediately rose from table and left the house, leaving word, in case he waked, that she would return shortly. She next proceeded with the utmost diligence to the shops she had before remarked, and, going into a jeweller's, she offered some things for sale.

"'You know, ma'am,' she said, 'your large diamond ring?—I showed him that, and

rubbing up my French as well as I could, asked what he would give me for it. So he turned it and turned it about, making a great many objections, most of which I did not understand; and, at length, he said he would give me thirty louis. I was quite indignant, for I knew it had cost more than four times that sum, and I was still disputing with him, partly by words, and partly by signs, when another jeweller came into the shop, and finding what a good bargain it was likely to be, he said he would give me twice that sum. Then the two men began outbidding one another, so that at length I was so lucky as to get ninety-five guineas for it.'

"In short she went on giving me an account of what she had sold, and concluded by throwing into my lap a purse containing two hundred guineas.

"I could not sufficiently admire the activity

and cleverness of this good girl, as well as her disinterestedness, for she would hear neither of thanks nor rewards, saying that she was more than repaid when she had it in her power to do anything to serve me.

"The day approached on which Lord Y—— was to hear my final resolve, and I felt proportionably my courage decrease.

"But that of my good Lucy seemed to augment with the nearer view of danger, and she cheered me up with the most favourable presages.

"Two days before the so much dreaded one, she came to me in breathless haste, declaring that the next night we might have an opportunity of escaping; her lover having solicited her to take a moonlight walk, after his master and the rest of the inhabitants were asleep; to which she consented on condition that he was to go out first, leaving the house-door

open, that she might slip out whenever her mistress was in bed. She proposed to me, that we should then make our escape, and walk, during the night, to La Rochelle, taking an ass with us (for my son to ride on) which used to graze in the forest, and which Lucy had taught to come at her call, by feeding it out of her hand. It was probable we should not be missed till a late hour in the morning, as the servant would merely conclude that some trifle had prevented her from keeping her appointment. We hoped, if fortune favoured us, to find a vessel of some kind, bound for England, at the port; and, if not, we proposed to put ourselves under the protection of the magistrates.

"Such was our plan, which, though hazardous, I did not despair of executing, through the unwearied perseverance and activity of Lucy.

"On the day that was fixed upon for our flight, I was all the morning in the most painful agitation. At every noise I heard, at every word that was spoken, I imagined we were discovered. I repeated to myself as I looked around my chamber, shall I, indeed, never behold these hated walls again?—can it be, that ere to-morrow, at this time, my captive body will be free—free from the power of my cruel tormentor?—the joy of the idea almost convulsed me.

"Hear what follows, and judge if I have not been marked out by heaven to prove what the human heart can bear without breaking.

"Lucy and I were sitting in my chamber, hardly breathing, as we listened to the last sounds in the house before every thing was hushed. We waited with longing impatience till all was quiet, that we might wake my little George. I must here break off—I can-

not now proceed—my hand shakes, and my heart sickens. * * * * *

"Fortitude! I have clung to you long; for many a bitter trial has taught me you were more necessary to my existence than the air I breathe. Forsake me not, now that I enter upon the relation of those sufferings which Providence was pleased to inflict upon me.

"Lucy approached the bed-side of my boy—she stopped a moment.—'How burning hot he is,' said she, and begged me to bring the candle. His face was like crimson, his breath short and interrupted, and his pulse soon told me that he was in a high fever! Lucy and I looked at each other in mute consternation: to depart was impossible, and I even feared for my child's life. What was to be done, I knew not, and I wrung my hands in agony over him. 'We must have a physician immediately,' said I; but Lucy was already out of

the room; she had flown to Lord Y——'s chamber, and desired him to send directly for one.

"A man and horse were dispatched instantaneously, and Lucy returned with Lord Y——: but before they entered, my boy had waked, and waked in such a state! He was completely delirious.—How can I describe what followed?—where find language to paint the feelings of an agonized mother, watching the dying moments of her darling—her only child?

"The physician came; he declared the disorder to be a raging fever, and gave me but little hopes. My suffering infant knew no one but me; he could not endure any one else to be near him, and imagined every person he saw, was going to tear him from me. He would sleep no where but in my arms; he would swallow nothing but what I gave him.

Three days did he continue almost continually delirious—on the fourth he regained his senses, poor infant, but was so weak that my faint hopes fled.

"His dear hands were constantly clasped round my neck, and his head lay on my bosom. At every pain that racked his little frame he would not utter a groan, but fixed his eyes piteously and imploringly on mine, as if begging me to give him ease. A faint sob at times, and a hard drawn sigh, while his little arms pressed my neck more closely, told when he suffered, and went like daggers to my heart. I could only pray for him; but God, in his wisdom, thought it good to take him from me. He lay in that state till evening, his eyes always fixed on mine till, without a struggle, he sighed gently, and breath forsook his body! * * * * *

"My friends, will you weep over my misfor-

tunes? Can you imagine what I felt? Oh, no, it is impossible. Yet I did not shed one tear over the inanimate face of my darling; but I longed to be at rest.

"My strength failed me not—with my own hands did I lay out the beauteous corpse, and watched by it day and night, while, with eyes of despair, I gazed on the placid, heavenly countenance, in which the last traces of life-blood gradually faded to the hue of death. All my woes return with pristine force when I remember that fatal morning, when I was to take the last look of that beloved child.

"I hung on the coffin without power to turn my eyes on that face I was never more to behold. At length, with a trembling hand, I lifted the covering, and looked at my boy. A long, long, last look I took.—I wept not—I spoke not—but I thought my heart would burst. When shall I taste such repose,

thought I, as I kissed the clay-cold lips of the little innocent. I stood by, I saw the coffin closed upon the child of my love—I followed him to his last bed—I heard the earth flung on his coffin: at every repeated sound that it made, I felt as though it would be my last moment. I threw myself on the grave, and lay there in mute, motionless despair. No power could make me stir from it, till, exhausted with the acuteness of my sufferings, I fainted.

"I was carried back to bed, where I continued, from one fainting-fit into another, the whole night, and all the next day. Lord Y—— sent again for the physician, and cruelly strove to save my life. Had he not had the heart of a monster he would have left me to die, and spared me the torments he had in store for me.

"Soporifics of every kind were administered

to me, and, for a week, I was kept almost entirely in a state of stupor.

"My youth and strength at length overcame my disorder, and, with a grief that all my religious sentiments could not conquer, I felt my health return.

"My reviving faculties were directed to the remembrance of my Edward, and I again felt the miseries of captivity, which, for some time, had been swallowed up in acuter agony. The physician who had attended me, had never been permitted to see me in private. Lucy had also been watched, and not one opportunity had presented itself of making known my misfortunes or demanding assistance.

"My spirit was now gone—a deep melancholy had seized on my mind, and I felt unable to cope by art, with the villainy of Lord Y——. He recommenced his persecutions,

and, insensible to pity, became more urgent, as I grew more desponding.

"At length wearied with my delays and resistance, he swore in the most shocking terms, that he would no longer have the weakness to yield to my caprices. His conversation I cannot repeat—suffice it to say, that driven to distraction, I at once threw off the mask, and boldly declared, that death was preferable to his hated love; that neither force nor persuasion should ever bend me to his will, and that I only existed by the hope of being reunited by some happy chance to my adored Edward.

"The fiend smiled with his own terrific grin. 'You defy me, madam,' said he—'I will try if your stubborn spirit is not to be broken. Let us see what you will say to a paper I have here.'

"He opened a writing desk, and took out two

newspapers, one of them was dated three days after my fatal departure from England. 'Do me the favour, madam, to listen to this paragraph,' said he.

"'We hear that Lord Y——, wishing to free himself from the bondage of a certain fair lady who was become rather too fond, set off on a jaunt to the Continent; but the lady, who is wife to his brother, was so tenacious of his Lordship's fickle heart, that she insisted upon eloping with him, and these fashionable lovers have not been heard of since.'

"'Base, vile calumny!' cried I, 'my Edward will not give credit to it——"

"'Your Edward?' cried he, stamping his foot with fury—'then all shall come out—listen again—

"'DREADFUL CATASTROPHE.

"'It is with concern that we announce to the public, a late shocking accident in a family

of great celebrity. The Honourable Edward M——, who landed five days ago, was hastening to the arms of an adored wife, when at an inn about nine miles from his estate, he learnt that the frail fair one had absconded with his brother, taking her child with her; and that they had passed that way in great spirits about ten days before.

" 'We are sorry to state the consequences—The gentleman shut himself up in one of the rooms and shot himself through the head.—He expired instantly, and has been buried privately in the family vault.'

" Not one of these dreadful words escaped me—that I should have heard it through was astonishing; I not only heard it, but every word was engraven in characters of fire upon my brain.

" I remember nothing afterwards—I became instantly delirious, and knew no one; yet as I

was afterwards told, I always became outrageous at sight of Lord Y——: I by turns sang, wept, called upon my husband, my child —uttered imprecations on my Edward's murderer. But I will not shock your feelings with the horrible account of my ravings, such as they were afterwards described to me.

"My senses did not begin to return for three months afterwards, and then they only dawned upon me by degrees; after that I was long hovering between life and death, and so weak that I was hardly sensible of any violent pain, either mental or bodily. Lord Y—— was forced to give up visiting me for some time; for at sight of him I relapsed into incoherent ravings, and afterwards, when my reason was perfectly restored, my body was so weak that I fainted whenever he came into the room.

"I cannot sufficiently wonder at the strength

of constitution, which could enable me to survive two such dreadful misfortunes, so near to one another. When I recovered some degree of health, I found myself entirely changed in mind and body.

"So complete was the transformation which had taken place in my appearance, that it would have been impossible for any one to have known me—not even Edward himself, had he been alive, could have recognised me: my bloom was gone—my rayless eyes were sunk and fixed, and it seemed as though an age of suffering had bowed my emaciated form to the earth. I could not even trace a resemblance between my former self and my present wan, wasted form. I thought that Lord Y—— would now perhaps hate me, and the thought almost gave me a feeling of pleasure.

"But the state of my mind was far more

woeful; feebleness of body had for some time blunted the keen edge of my miseries, but not one ray of comfort cheered the gloom of my future prospects—I had not one joy to look forward to in my dreary path through life, and the nature of my misfortunes precluded the possibility of expecting any alleviation from time. The present was yet more dreadful; still in the power of him who had hurled me from felicity to wretchedness, who had for ever deprived me of every blessing I enjoyed; I could not rest in apathy and say, 'fate, thou hast no more pangs in store for me'—he who had robbed me of husband, and my fame, was not yet satisfied with guilt.

"He was become more savage than ever, from the result of his scheme; and probably repenting of having undertaken so difficult and dangerous a one, he was more than ever resolved to admit of no new delays.

"Such was the tenor of my daily reflections, of my nightly dreams; and my weakness, though it promised no very distant termination to my sufferings, yet precluded the hopes of immediate dissolution.

"The thought of sending Lucy away, to procure protection and release for me, at La Rochelle, was no sooner formed than rejected. By depriving myself of my only support, I should only raise Lord Y——'s suspicions, who would carry me off, most probably to some other place, where I might never be traced.

"In hopeless monotony did my days glide on. Truly may I say that, in the morning, I cried, 'Would God it were evening!' and in the evening, 'would God it were morning!' Six months had passed since my first arrival in that fatal land. Lord Y——, more than ever animated with rage, revenge, and disappoint-

ment, grew daily more terrific. A voluntary death had more than once presented itself to me, as my only resource.

"During the time of my illness, Lord Y—— had mixed in the most dissipated society of the neighbouring city; for his guilt and fears gave him no repose; and, to drive away thought, he was almost constantly intoxicated, though he redoubled his vigilance in guarding me, and seemed to grow more suspicious than ever.

"One morning I was seated with Lucy, in my chamber, in melancholy silence—for she had given up the vain attempt of consoling me, when we heard confused sounds below, and presently Lord Y—— calling loudly and repeatedly for his horse, and swearing at the delay of his servant. Lucy looked out of the window, and beheld him walking impatiently to the stables: hardly waiting to have it

saddled, he leaped on its back, and burying his spurs in its sides, set off at full gallop.

"I heard the trampling of the horse's feet, and it gave me a pang at my heart. 'Would to Heaven,' said I, 'that with equal speed I also could quit this detested dwelling. Oh, Lucy, if I could but lay my head at rest in my native country, I should be thankful!' At that moment our hostess entered, with a countenance as pale as death, and seeming half enraged, half frightened. She related to Lucy, who had learnt her language, that Lord Y——, in a drunken broil at La Rochelle the night before, had stabbed a young gentleman of good family in the neighbourhood. He was carried home speechless, and Lord Y—— had remained concealed the whole night to learn the consequences. Early in the morning he heard that the unhappy man had breathed his last, and that the officers of the police were in

search of his murderer. He had fled precipitately, and having outstripped them, had mounted his horse, and was flying from them at the time we had seen him depart. He had only time to recommend his vile agent to guard me closely till he should return or send for me; and without listening to her objections and difficulties, he had rode off, only promising her immense rewards if she proved faithful. The woman was half distracted with fear and rage; she expected the officers of justice every instant, to search her house; she would not be able to make herself understood by them, as she could not speak a word of French. The woman was as ignorant and cowardly as she was guilty, and she expected nothing less than to be brought to punishment instead of him.

"Lucy began immediately to speak to her in a threatening and commanding voice. They

held a parley for some time, the woman sometimes scolding, and sometimes coaxing; at length she held up her hands, shaking them, shrugging up her shoulders, and then left the room.

"Lucy flew up to me, and dropping on the ground, embraced my knees. 'We are free,' said she. I raised her up, and embracing her, shed a torrent of tears at the unexpected blessing.

"In hurried, interrupted words, while Lucy was preparing for our removal, she told me that she had threatened the woman that the moment the officers of justice arrived she would accuse her of being an accomplice in the murder. She said she would stand up and accuse her in court, and have her brought to condign punishment. She persuaded her that nobody in the town could speak German, and that she should be condemned without a hear-

ing. When she had struck terror into the woman by these threats, she told her, that the only way of saving herself was to allow me to depart. The hostess was now extremely courteous, and promised to consent whenever these dreaded officers departed; but Lucy would hear of no concessions, and threatened that nothing could save the woman, but permitting us to leave the house instantly. She was long before she could decide. The fear of Lord Y——'s wrath, and the loss of her reward on one hand; and on the other, the dreaded severities of justice stared her in the face; at length, the present fear gaining the mastery over a more distant contingency, she, with much tribulation, had given us leave to depart, and left our doors unbarred.

"Most providentially, her husband did not live in the house, or Lucy's threats might have been fruitless. He served in the inn at

La Rochelle, where Lord Y——, to deceive me better, had at first taken me.

"Half an hour after this conversation, I saw myself without those hated walls, never again to re-enter them. My road lay not far from the spot where my sainted infant's mortal part had been committed to the earth. I visited that grave, sacred to every feeling of past happiness—I watered it with the last tears that were shed on its green turf—I cast myself on the ground that covered my child. The tide of grief swelled my heart. On that spot, again I mourned my husband, and my offspring. 'Dear, blessed infant,' I cried, 'child of happiness and love, thy bones must moulder in a foreign land!—thy mother's weary eyes shall never more behold the spot where thou art laid, but in distance shall it be ever before me, and in another land shall those tears be daily shed for thee." Sobs

stopped my utterance, and in silence I lay on the grave, communing with those blessed spirits that had once made my happiness on earth. At length I tore myself from the cruel, loved tomb, and, casting a last lingering look on it, I lost sight of it for ever!

"My friends, do you call to mind how often your curiosity has been excited by those drawings which you have seen me water with tears? It was that spot that I loved to design in every point of view. Often have my hours been spent in tracing from memory the grave where my child is laid. The gloomy beauty of the place was always present to my imagination; those wide spreading beeches that sheltered the beauteous clay, that defended the holy ground from winter's storms and summer's scorching suns, were too strongly painted in my heart ever to be effaced by time.

Often has my young friend, Charles, admired the beauty of the spot, often has the tear of commiseration moistened his eyes when I have told him, that earth contained an angel's mortal part, and that my happiness was buried there!

"But I have digressed—to return then to my narrative: we did not take the road to La Rochelle, but, turning off at the village of Marans, we proceeded by cross roads, and after a tedious journey of six days, we arrived, without accident, at Barfleur, where we set sail in a small fishing vessel, and reached Weymouth the next evening.

"During our passage we deliberated what we should do upon landing, and whither I should take shelter from the scoffs of the world. A parent's house would be the most eligible retreat; and well knowing that my dear and

indulgent father would give credit to my tale, and soothe my misfortunes, I determined to proceed thither.

"The mother of Lucy lived in a cottage upon my father's estate; thither I resolved to go, and write to him from thence, as I could not have supported a meeting till my innocence was clearly made known to him.

"Changed as I was, I had no apprehensions of being known, and dressed myself in the plainest manner, to avoid notice. As I approached my father's hospitable dwelling, I saw many faces well known to me, but not one recognised the once happy daughter of their honoured master.

"It was on a bleak autumnal evening, about dusk, when we stopped at Martha Smith's cottage, having walked from the neighbouring town, which was only three miles off.

"We knocked at the door, and the good old

dame opened it herself: on hearing her daughter's voice, she flew to, and embraced her with transport.

"They both remained silent for some time; at length Lucy found her voice. 'Mother,' said she, 'I have brought a friend with me.' 'Oh, come in, come in,' said the good woman, 'Lucy's friend is welcome to me. Come, children, I am sure you must be almost frozen.' We entered, and she followed, ejaculating, 'my dear child's come back to me; oh, dear, dear, I am so glad, I don't know what to do.' We sat down in the clean kitchen; old Martha heaping more wood on the fire, and bustling about to prepare us something comfortable after our cold walk.

"While she was thus occupied, Lucy told her I was a young woman who had come over in the ship with her, and wanted a place; to all which, Martha answered most kindly. As for

me, my heart was so big, I could not speak a word. She lighted a candle, and set some of her clean, simple fare before us. When she saw I could not eat, she clapped me on the shoulder, saying, 'poor child, I see you're down-hearted a bit; do take something to comfort you. I won't ask questions; I see by your black clothes you've had a loss.'

"The old woman now sat down at the table, and leaning on her elbows, looked at her daughter for some time. At length she broke silence. 'Lucy,' said she, but stopped, for her voice faltered, and a tear trickled down her withered cheek.—Lucy understood that she meant to make some enquiries, with regard to her absence, and began some explanations vaguely with regard to me; but old Martha stopped her.—'No, child,' said she, 'I won't hear one word more—I cannot bear it—that poor lady—I have dandled her in these arms,

she was a good young lady once, a virtuous darling—I can't bear to hear of it. Never mention her name as you value my anger, Lucy.—I have quarrelled with all the neighbours, for I would not hear her talked of in such a way. O, alack! it went nigh to break my heart.—I am satisfied that you are come home, dear. I am sure you are good, so never speak to me of the rest.'

"'And how is my good old master, Sir William?' said Lucy.

"'What!' replied Martha, 'you have not heard that our honoured master is dead? poor, poor Sir William, he died of grief—that horrible story killed him.'

"I clasped my hands together.—'God give me strength,' I cried. Lucy ran to me—her mother started back; then seizing the candle, she held it to my face, put it down with a look of horror, ran to the bed, and, falling on her

knees before it, covered her face, and sobbed aloud.

"I continued calling on the Almighty to have pity on me, wringing my hands, and walking about the room distractedly. The old woman raised her head as I stood near her.—'Yes, pray,' said she, 'pray to God, and he will have mercy on you—poor thing, poor thing, you have got your punishment in this world.'

"There was something strikingly affecting in the tone, with which her aged lips uttered this mild reproof.—I sunk on my knees at her side and poured out the overflowings of my bruised spirit to the throne of grace.

"Lucy went up to her mother, and taking her hand, said, 'I must speak with you in another room, mother'—saying which, she drew her away.

"I remained on my knees supplicating for that fortitude of which I stood so greatly in

need.—Now, thought I, I have nothing more to lose;—those I love are happy in heaven, and they know my innocence—father, husband, child, dear ties that once bound me to the earth, you now call me to the land of peace—a few short years and I shall regain those blessed spirits. I will submit without murmuring, till God in his mercy shall call me away. Are we not told that this life is but a state of probation? and does not the sacred volume say, that, 'whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth?'

"Long I continued in prayer, in holy meditation—a blessed calm had been poured on my bleeding heart—I rose from my knees with feelings of resignation. At that moment, old Martha re-entered the room—she cast herself at my feet, and embraced my knees—I could not persuade her to rise.—'Say you will forgive me for having dared to suspect you of

doing wrong,' said she. I assured her that I had not for an instant felt irritated at her, and that on the contrary I was grateful for the compassion she had expressed for me.

"'You were always an angel,' said the affectionate creature, 'and you may forgive me, but I cannot forgive myself.' The good woman poured out her heart in blessings and prayers for me, and I felt grateful that there was one being on earth that retained affection for me.

"These feelings were at once grateful and painful to me, or, to speak more properly, I could never hope to experience a sensation unmixed with pain. My humble friends understood that quiet was necessary for me, and I soon retired to a bed as comfortable as good will and cleanliness could make it. But sleep visited not my worn-out eyes; busy thought

drove rest far from me. With horror I considered my forlorn and miserable situation. In the first moments of agony, nature could not entirely be suppressed; all that religion could do, was to bid me bear the load of existence. Again the thought of my unparalleled woes assailed me with fresh bitterness.—Tears, heart-wrung tears I shed, that were claimed alike by my venerable father, my youthful husband, my blooming child.—My body, worn out with sufferings, could no longer, as formerly, revolt with convulsive violence from the weight of sorrow, but without a struggle sunk feeble and powerless under its repeated and heavy strokes. The last effort of my strength had given me momentary firmness, but it was soon exhausted and a state of wretched debility followed. I could not rise from bed, and so entirely weakened was I, that neither Lucy nor her mother

ever thought I could quit it alive.—I had only power to beg that my name might be carefully concealed from every one.

"In this state I continued long—it would have been worse than death to any one else—for me it was preferable to strong health, for it took from me the power of feeling with equal acuteness: a state resembling premature old age had seized me, and I believed myself in a decline. The dame insisted, much against my will, upon sending for a physician; but it was my duty, and I submitted. A thousand times I had seen the man, yet had no apprehensions of being recognised by him.—My voice, like my features, was changed—great grief totally deprives the voice of all modulation, the sound of my own frightened me. I yielded to the desire of my affectionate attendants, and patiently took the remedies that were given me;

but they could not cure the disease of the mind, or heal a broken heart.

"The return of spring, however, brought back to me a portion of strength, though from that time my health was radically destroyed. I began to leave my bed, and could sit up or converse—I was distressed at having so long trespassed on the time and cares of my humble friend: I was musing on this one day when Dame Smith come and sat down by my bedside.

"'By the blessing of God, my lady,' said she, 'I now see you better; is it not time you should make known who you are, and declare your misfortunes and innocence?'

"'And why so, good Martha?' said I.

"'Only because, to be sure, my lady, that must be done before you can go into company again.'

"'Company!—do you think it would give me pleasure?—will the world restore me my father, my husband, my child?—Which way could I turn, unhappy wretch that I am? would not every person point to me, and say, 'there is the woman who caused the death of her husband, who drove her father's grey hairs with sorrow to the grave?'

"The old woman hid her face in her apron.—Lucy sobbed aloud. After a moment's silence I continued: 'Perhaps you think, in the simplicity of your hearts, that when my story is known, my character will be restored. Alas! such is not the way of the world.—What! will people believe that story from my lips? a story without proof!—and a story so marvellous! Might it not be the fabrication of an abandoned woman?—a stratagem to re-instate herself in society? Had my father been in life, he would not have doubted of my veracity.—For his sake

I would have struggled with the world; but now, no one is interested whether I am innocent or guilty; so that, even were I again to be received into society, that world would be a desert to me, and not a peaceful one. I have no relations of my own alive, except a cousin, a maiden lady, much older than myself, who never liked me.—So early married, so dotingly attached to my husband, I had never formed any intimate female friendship. My husband's mother I never lived with; she was a stern, unamiable woman, she would cast me off.

"'I have no strength to buffet with the world; and I feel as much pleasure as it is in my power now to feel, in thinking that it is not my duty so to do. That I am returned to England must remain a secret; the injurious doubts and conjectures I should be subjected to, are more than I can bear.'

"'Pardon me, madam,' said Lucy, 'for venturing to give my opinion, and saying that it is a duty we owe to ourselves to clear our character, if it has been unjustly aspersed.'

"'True, good Lucy,' said I; 'but I have nothing but my own assertion—will the simple asseveration of a woman accused of the blackest crimes be believed?' Lucy hung down her head, and was silent. I continued—'After all my sufferings, the only thing I can hope for is peace during the remainder of my wretched existence; in some remote corner I may pass my days undisturbed: no new misfortune can assail me now.' These words appeared peculiarly to affect my companions, whose extreme sympathy was painful as well as gratifying to me.

"From this time I soon regained strength enough to travel, and resolved to begin my journey. It was my intention to retire to a

distant part of England, and seek some solitary habitation, where I should never have a chance of being known.

"My money and jewels were more than sufficient for what I should require to support me during the rest of my life in a cottage.

"Ere I left the country, I formed the resolution of visiting my father's house. It was but a short walk from the dame's house; I went, accompanied by Lucy, to view as a stranger the house in which I had been born. With feeble steps I tottered to the hospitable door of the noble mansion, which now belonged to a stranger. It had been already purchased, but the owner had not yet taken possession.

"I kept my eyes fixed on the ground lest I should raise them to the escutcheon. When we entered, I sat down in the hall, while Lucy went to procure the keys from the housekeeper, who being infirm, gladly resigned to her the

trouble of shewing the rooms, which was what I wished, as I feared to betray myself by my emotions.

"With a beating heart and trembling limbs I entered the well known apartments, that recalled thousands of tender, agonizing feelings to my heart. The furniture was all either removed or displaced, but my fancy painted every article in the same order as it had been when my dear mother and I inhabited it. She had died three years before; how unhappy did I think myself then, yet so wretched was I now, that it seemed to me a merciful dispensation of Providence that she did not live to witness my misfortunes.

"Every part of the room recalled some dear remembrance, and my tears fell copiously at the recollection of past felicity. Even the marks on the walls, that reminded me that

drawings by my hand had once been suspended there, gave me indescribable emotions.

"I approached the chimney-piece, and sought for a well known mark; but my tears falling in large drops on the marble, dimmed my sight: again I looked, and discovered the characters I sought. The fond youthful fancies of my Edward and I before our marriage, when on a winter's evening, leaning idly on the chimney-piece, we had carved our names, twined together in different forms, with all sorts of devices and quaint little emblems. I remembered the witching looks that lengthened out the work, while my mother smilingly would chide, and my father laughing, would call us two foolish children. With all the weakness of doting love, I called to mind those blissful moments, those happy trifles, which are of such importance to lovers. I co-

vered these mementos with kisses, I watered them with tears.

"At length I felt the folly of indulging those dear ideas, and delicious tenderness gave way to bitter and corroding regrets. I turned from these objects with an aching heart, and with feelings for which language is too poor.

"Suffice it to say that I suffered every painful emotion that the recollection of past bliss can give to increase the pangs of present misery. I groaned over the bed in which my father had expired; I gazed with mute agony and despair on the spot where I had given my hand to my ever to be lamented Edward.

"Is it not better to draw a veil over such feelings?—they were almost too acute for the human frame; I had borne every thing it was possible to bear of unalloyed misery; but vivid and recent mementos of precious tenderness gave a new turn to my anguish; I was not

prepared for that luxury of woe, and I gave way to it with culpable weakness—there was a moment when I could have fancied Edward at my side—the dear delusion, could it last? Ah! I need not answer the question. I was bewildered, torn, and agonized by my feelings, and was too elevated at the moment, to be sensible how prejudicial to me they were.

"It was not without a painful effort that I could tear myself from the place that increased the violence of my anguish. As I passed the hall, I happened to cast my eyes in one corner, and beheld a walking stick of my father's, and on the ground close to it lay his old favourite spaniel: I flew to it, and hailed it as a friend; the faithful animal, more discerning than mankind, recognised me instantly, fawning on me, and jumping about in transport. 'Your fate seems changed as well as mine, poor Carlo,' said I, 'if one may judge by your lean,

neglected appearance—we will henceforth be companions in misfortune.' No one valued the worn out creature, and I took him with me as the most precious memento of my beloved father.

"At length I departed. As I crossed the door an icy shivering ran through my veins: I stood on the spot where, four years before, my father had given me his parting embrace, where my mother had held me to her heart, and blessed me. How happy, how unthinking I was that day! The house, the trees are unchanged, thought I; I stand in the same spot, breathe the same air—I am the same Clara: O why, why do not the same dear objects surround me? I groaned bitterly. How little did I think I should ever leave L—— Grove, with such a tortured heart. O, could I have foreseen, I might have accompanied Edward abroad! Again I involuntarily groaned, and clasping my

hands together, rushed with frantic haste from the house.

"There was at some distance from it, a large laburnam tree in the wood, which was rendered dear to me by the past; there was a rustic seat under it, where often and often had I sat with my Edward, when hours flew by as moments; I would not leave the grove without a memorial. I approached the tree, and gathered a branch: often too had my Edward pleased himself in decking my dark hair with its golden clusters. But it had now lost its garish dress, and the few dying leaves on it appeared to bear a strong resemblance to my own fate. My joys had once bloomed gay like the laburnam flowers; but they were gone, almost as transitorily too—that tree thought I, again will flower, but where the hand that used to gather them?—cold, cold in dust!—It will flower again, but this branch,

severed from the tree, shall be an emblem of me, torn from my Edward—both shall wither, to revive no more.

"Accustomed as I was to every painful feeling, I had not grown callous, and the effects of my mournful visit deferred my journey for a day. After having forced on my kind hostess a small remuneration, I left her house loaded with prayers and blessings, taking Lucy with me, who was to return to her aged mother, when she saw me settled.

"To give a detail of my journey, even were it in my power, is not my wish—too much engrossed by my own thoughts to bestow a look upon the country through which we passed, I met with nothing else to engross my attention. I had always had a partiality for the local beauties of Cumberland, and wished to find some retired cottage, near one of the lakes. This proved to be more difficult than I expect-

ed, from the number of travellers resorting thither in summer. Cottages there were, but none could I find near the lakes, where I might reasonably hope to remain always unremarked. At length I discovered a remote house on the top of the most barren hill, and quite out of sight of the lake of Winandermere. This spot had nothing apparently to recommend it, but extreme retirement and tranquillity; yet it was Providence that led me to it, as a means of obtaining the greatest comfort I could enjoy. I mean the society of two virtuous, amiable, and commiserating beings, to whose hearts misfortune was a passport, and who could soothe the woes they sought not to draw to light: but they love not praise, and mine falls short of what they deserve, who have the noble approbations of their own hearts, and the gratitude of those who are poor, or in misery.

"In this hut I hired a room for a week, and

took up my abode there, while Lucy went to visit her brother, who kept a shop at Appleby, and whom she had not seen for several years.

"The profound and entire solitude, which for the first time I enjoyed, soothed my mind, and was of service to my body. I persuaded the persons to whom the cottage belonged, to let their room for the whole winter. As the spring advanced, the season being very inviting, I was almost constantly without doors. In one of my rambles, a few days before I intended to leave my mountainous abode, fortune led me to your peaceful dwelling—what followed I need not recapitulate.

"My kind, excellent protectors, to you jointly do I owe all the comforts, which since the commencement of our acquaintance I have been capable of enjoying. And the blessings, the earnest blessings of a dying woman, be on you!—may every happiness attend you! As

you have wept for others, and have dried their tears, whose sources could be dried, oh, may you never weep for yourselves !—may you never know sorrow !—accept my warmest gratitude, my fervent prayers !

"Let these pages console you for my loss—weep, weep for the depravity of human nature, but weep not for Clara at peace."

Can words have power to paint the sensations of an agonized husband, in this oft interrupted narrative—the momentary transports, the mingled rage, pity, horror, love, and despair ? These emotions may be partly imagined, but they never can be expressed. More calm in the evening, I enjoyed luxury of woe with my sympathizing companions ; these were moments of happiness, compared to those I had suffered for years past. These mental tumults somewhat hushed, I requested of the

clergyman, whose name was Denham, to relate to me what followed the narrative of my angel Clara. He desired his son Charles to gratify me; the young man thus spoke:—

"It was a fine evening in the end of May, six years ago, when, according to my usual custom, I sallied out to take a solitary walk. I was making my way through some natural brushwood, about two miles from here, when my dog, attracted by some unusual appearance, darted past me, barking violently. I then found he was pursuing a large spaniel, that fled before him, and soon sheltered itself in the arms of a lady, who lay half reclined under a tree; from the spot where I stood, I could not be perceived, and stopped a moment to contemplate her; surprised at seeing a lady in such a wild spot, and far from any road: she was clad in the deepest mourning, and her long black

veil thrown back, discovered a countenance, whose beauty was at once the most dazzling and touching; such a countenance as once seen, never could be forgotten."

Here his deep sigh was echoed by mine—after a pause he continued.

"She was preparing to depart, when my dog again flew upon hers, and I then advanced, calling it off, and making some excuses for its fierceness. My words faltered on my tongue, for who could be eloquent, while gazing on her matchless face?—A mild, settled dejection set on her pale, bloodless countenance; the most perfect symmetry graced her features; she lifted her melting eyes on me, and attempting to smile, she said, 'my poor Carlo's life is very valuable to me; he is the greatest treasure I possess.'

"'I fear, madam,' said I, 'it is not one

you will enjoy long, for he seems very old?'

"'He will last out my life, I hope,' said she, in a low voice.

"Seeing that she was so fatigued, as to be scarcely able to walk, I begged she would permit me to conduct her to my father's house, where I assured her, both he and my mother, would be happy to offer her every civility in their power.

"She excused herself for some time, but finding that she really was too weak to return, she at length yielded to my solicitations: I offered her my arm, and we took the nearest road to the Parsonage. Though she spoke little, she seemed much gratified at the first sight of our little lake, and said, on looking at the village, that it was such a spot as she would wish to inhabit. My answer you may easily guess, and it is not of myself I would talk, but of that fair, sainted excellence."

"I will take up your narrative," said the father: "I was sauntering down my yew avenue, after sunset, when I was surprised at seeing my son advance to meet me, with a lady leaning on his arm: I was struck by her elegant and majestic figure. At a distance it bespoke her what she was, for, need I say, that the soul which animated her, graced every motion, and stamped her a being apart. A fascination which she possessed above every human extreme, and which seemed almost to form a peculiar atmosphere around her, attracted me towards her, and, ere my son had introduced her, I was strongly prepossessed in her favour. I pique myself, on being a little of a physiognomist, and most sure I was not mistaken here. Her face was like alabaster, her black pencilled eyebrows, beneath a forehead of dazzling fairness, her eyes of celestial expression and hue, her air of despondency,

mingled with dignity, made her appear more than mortal. If such she was, when I knew her, what must she have been, ere she was so changed that her acquaintance knew her not!"

"Oh!" exclaimed I, "she was exquisite beyond the power of imagination to conceive—she was too gloriously beautiful for envy, too heavenly to be praised—and I was, most blessed."

"Her conversation," continued he, "did not belie the exalted opinion I had formed of her; and I had not been half an hour in company with her, when I felt ready to sacrifice my life for her.—I could not doubt that she was virtuous, and I saw she was unhappy. Oh, she was indeed beyond expression excellent! How could the person that had once gazed on that countenance, suspect her for one moment of guilt!"

I struck my hand with violence on my forehead, and, darting out of the house, distracted-

ly, took the road to the churchyard, too quick to be pursued, and threw myself in agonies, on the grave of my sainted love. The words of the venerable man had cut me to the soul —I felt all my weakness and guilt in their full force—I accused myself of her misfortunes—I was the base coward that had caused more than half her misery.

"Alas! alas!" cried I, "what number of years rolling over my head, can wash from my memory that I dared to accuse my heavenly Clara?—I wronged, I was not worthy of her—I did not know the treasure I possessed. But what do I say?—Not know the treasure?—did I not prize her above all earthly things?—did I not think myself richer in that treasure than emperors on their thrones?—Did I not reject life as a bauble, when *she* was lost to me?"

"And it was in that, my son, that you greatly sinned against your Maker, and it is for that

you should mourn," said a voice, which proved to be Mr. Denham, who, having followed me, had overheard the last words.

I was abashed by the severe, yet mild look of the old gentleman. I held down my head, and answered not, but I was sensible of the justice of his reproof.—He continued—

"So lately that you have perused your sainted partner's history, do you dare, without shame, to give way to repining?—have you not traced in it the most exalted effects of piety to support a bruised spirit?—have you not seen her struggling throughout with unparalleled misfortunes—misfortunes which, though unmerited, never drew bitterness or complaining from her gentle heart?—Did you mark how severely she reproves herself for one instance of impatience, while suffering under the most acute sufferings?—Do you not trace a life supported throughout by the force of

piety? With what angelic meekness did she bend to the stroke, the repeated stroke of adversity!"

"No more—no more," cried I, dashing myself again on the ground, "do you think my heart is of stone, or do you wish to break it—else why these cruel words, that tear open my bleeding wounds—these soul-rending reflections?"

"Hear me, good young man," said he, "for good I am willing to believe you are, though infatuated. Listen to the precepts of age, and draw consolation from what seems to increase your despair: your lacerated heart shrinks with torture from my plain words, but trust me, though they may give momentary pain, they will purify and ameliorate it. Think with gratitude on what is left to you, and complain not. Your Clara's sorrows were unmerited on earth, but exceeding glorious

shall be her reward in heaven. Yours have not been wholly undeserved: let them not, then, be without their salutary effect.

"By your own confession you attempted your own life—a great and grievous crime—a crime which requires ample atonement, by the zealous practice of every virtue in future. Labour, then, here below, and faint not when you know that it is to make yourself worthy of your Clara, in that world where you will one day meet. Let this thought give firmness to your purposes, and perseverance to the discharge of the duties incumbent on a Christian."

Humbled and touched, I took his hand and pressed it in mine. "I have indeed been guilty, most daringly guilty," replied I, "and you are a true friend, that have made me feel and acknowledge it from the depths of my heart."

Pleased, the old man took my arm, and slowly returned to the sacred cottage. His soothing discourse gave to my feelings another turn: he made me sensible of the blessing of having discovered my Clara's innocence, and turned my regrets towards my own guilt. He led me gradually to narrate the circumstances of my supposed death. The account of it, such as it was given in the newspapers, which had so fatal an affect on my angel wife, was, though not without foundation, yet far from correct.

"Transported with rage and despair, I forgot every thing but the sense of my wrongs, and did indeed rashly attempt my own life. A bottle of laudanum was swallowed in my frenzy, and soon produced insensibility. I was at an inn near my own estate, and no one with me but my servant. He believed me dead, as did also the people of the house;

but, notwithstanding he sent for a physician, and dispatched a messenger to my uncle and father-in-law, to give notice of my death, and demand instructions. A physician was not to be had, but an ignorant apothecary was called in, who positively declared me to be dead, but left some remedies, merely by way of indulging my servant, who insisted upon something being done for me.

"This affectionate servant was indefatigable in his exertions, till at length, without any assistance, (for the apothecary had immediately retired,) he restored me to a hated life. His joy was only to be equalled by my disappointment and confusion. The chamber I was in had been avoided by all; no one came near the wretch guilty of suicide; and the apothecary had said that all he could do for me, was to order a coffin.

"When I had somewhat regained the use of

my voice, I asked my servant if any one knew of my recovery. 'None yet, sir,' said he, 'for I have not had time to leave you for a moment; but I will run and proclaim the joyful news, if you please, my dear master.'

"'Stop, stop, Matthews,' said I, 'and listen to me: life is become odious to me—you cannot always watch me—there are many ways of dying; I shall elude the strictest vigilance. You have but one way to save my life.'

"The poor fellow stared at me with speechless consternation—I continued.

"'You must assist me to feign death, and, to carry on the deception, I must have a private burial. The inquest once over, and the verdict will probably be lunacy, I have no fear of detection.

"'If I remain on the face of the earth, I must feign a new existence. In this country I can no longer live, I will not breathe the air of

heaven, as the brother of Lord Y——, the son-in-law of Sir William, or'—I would have said the husband of Clara, but I remembered what she had once been to my heart, and my tongue faltered. Even at the mention of her father, my frame became convulsed—Matthews again trembled for me.

"When I recovered, I explained myself farther: 'Sir John S—— and Mr. L——' said I, 'whom you have sent for, will not take the trouble of investigating the reality of my decease. They will also be glad to hush up the matter by a speedy and private burial. Sir William will certainly not come so far, as you have written that all was over with me. I must be placed in the coffin, and at night you can favour my evasion. On this condition alone can I bear the burden of a shameful and dishonoured existence.' "

"O false, mistaken, and pernicious notions

of honour," said Mr. Denham, clasping his hands, "how long will ye lead presumptuous, unthinking man, by fair appearances, to the blackest crimes!"

"Pardon me, my virtuous friend," said I, "I spoke according to my past notions of things only. Now I am fully sensible of their fallacy.

"I have little more to add—my scheme was attended with success; I was only seen at night, in a room hardly lighted, and no suspicions were formed by the appearance of my body. One person only besides my servant, placed me in the coffin, and was glad to retire quickly. I was then taken out, and some heavy materials having been placed in lieu of me, the lid was instantly nailed on; and here began the epoch of my new life. Completely disguised I made my escape to an obscure village, where I remained till my strength enabled me to travel,

and where my servant rejoined me. I then passed over into France.

"You will be surprised that I expressed no desire of rescuing my son from the hands of his mother. I blush to confess that a base suspicion had usurped in my mind the place of certainty, and while I remembered the uncommon affection my brother had always professed for him, my blood boiled, and my frame shuddered. I will not even now dwell on the thought of how much I wronged her.

"I travelled through various countries, after which I volunteered into the service of Prussia; but after three years, I became disgusted with a military life. I again commenced rambling, and went over a great part of Turkey, and the Greek islands. From thence I returned by sea, and having narrowly escaped being taken by a corsair, at length landed safely at Venice.

"I had no longer any fear of being discover-

ed; besides the sabre wound which you perceive across my brow, I had learnt in my travels arts of disguisement, some of which I used, though the change in my person might almost have rendered it unnecessary.

"At Venice I became acquainted with a very amiable French gentleman, whose uncommon kindness and attentions called for some return on my part. He was about to return to Paris, and I was persuaded to accompany him.

"The second day after my arrival there, I was visited by a volatile young man, half-brother to my travelling companion, who insisted upon taking me about the town, and shewing me the world, as he called it. I yielded through listlessness to these officious attentions, but I need not say that the dissipations of Paris were so ineffectual in driving recollection from me, as every former pursuit had been. One evening this gay young man came to me, with the

intelligence that he had got admittance for me to the most brilliant house in Paris, and with the most pompous descriptions of its fêtes and parties, he dragged me away to it. He entertained me by the way with high flown eulogiums on the enchantress who presided over the fête: a perfect Circe, who drew all orders of men into her magic sphere; and was universally pronounced the most beautiful, the most elegant, and the most dashing English woman that ever graced Paris.

"Hardly knowing what I said, I enquired the name of the lady; as we were getting out of the carriage.

"'She is called Lady Y——,' replied he, 'but it is well known that she is only *chere amie* to my lord, who is famous for his amours.'

"Struck with agony and horror, I had barely presence of mind to plead a forgotten engagement; and, flying back to my lodgings, almost

in a state of distraction, I wrote a note of excuse to the gentlemen who had paid me so much attention, and left the city, vowing that no inducement should ever engage me to set foot in it again.

"You understand what were my dreadful suspicions; wretch that I was, to have ever nourished them. O that I could recall the past, recall it or annihilate—vain, vain corroding desire, how few there are who have not felt it! Weak mortals that we are, with fond repining woe, or bitter repentance like mine, we cry out, 'O that I could live over the days that are past!' while, regardless of the present, we furnish fresh food with every day, for the craving, fruitless wish.

"From this time, my friends, I have only to add that I wandered about in a melancholy and unsettled humour, regardless of all things around me. At length returning to England, I

continued my rambling way of life, and chance, or I should rather say an overruling Providence, guided me to this spot, where I hope at length to find peace."

"I like the temper of mind you are in now, my young friend," said Mr. Denham; "it will indeed give you peace. Heaven looks with pity and mercy on those who have been driven to a rash act, which their soul abhors, and which they seek to atone for, by a continued course of well doing. Yes, my son, you will be happy in another world, while the remembrance of your sainted wife's virtue and heroism here, will cheer the path you have yet to tread. Think of your brother, and bless your own fate. What, do you imagine, are his feelings? are they not akin to those of a murderer? Feared and hated by all men, the thought of another world, far from promising happi-

ness, will but increase to him the torments of the present."

"O dreadful state," said I, "let us not revert to it, turn to the subject on which my heart is fixed, and tell me of my Clara."

"She was received with open arms," said Mr. Denham, "by my wife, and our united prayers induced her to tarry with us. She sent for her faithful and excellent Lucy, who with pleasure found her mistress settled in a spot which seemed to suit her. This good girl married a person in the town of Appleby, and as her mother came to live with her she settled there; which enabled her to pay a visit to her angel lady twice a year.

"Clara purchased this cottage half a year after she came here, and it became, in her possession, the palace of charity. Her days were employed in the service of the poor, and it was her first

object in life to bestow that happiness on others, which she could never hope to enjoy herself. Raiment and food were liberally bestowed on all who wanted them, and the children of the poor were her especial care.

"The little girl, whom she adopted, had been always a favourite with her. She was the daughter of a soldier, who had fallen in the service of his country, and her mother had not survived the accounts of his death. The child was completely destitute, till that angel of beneficence extended her liberal hand to her, and took her to her bosom. She was only three years old at the time of her mother's death, which happened the second year of Clara's residence here.

"With her dying breath she solemnly committed this child to my care, and dearly have I cherished her as a gift of that departed saint."

"That child shall never want protectors," said I; "I will also be a father to it."

"Yes!" said Denham, "she has indeed a rich claim to our joint regards. Never can I forget the last moments of her benefactress."

"O tell me, tell me every thing," interrupted I; "there is luxury in this woe. Was she long ill?"

"She was not attacked by any violent illness," replied Charles, "but the flame of life gradually went out, and she daily appeared to grow more ethereal; her soul seemed to revive as her body faded to dissolution. She did not take to her bed, but when she became too weak to sit up, she lay on a couch—aye on that very couch she lay. I think I see her still: so radiant, and pale as she was, she had a brilliancy about her, that made her appear like an embodied angel. I could not look on her without awe."

The young man seemed greatly affected, and his father thus continued :—

" She knew her end was approaching, and freely told us so. She seemed to regain cheerfulness proportionably as the moment drew nigh. My son and I were constantly with her, for she kindly said, she wished to enjoy as much of our company as possible for the short time she should tarry with us. We came in one day, and found her sleeping on her couch, for she had risen early and was exhausted. Her face was concealed by the long crape veils she always wore. Her watch, and an open book were on the table by her—it was her favourite author, Young.

" She woke in a few minutes ; but she was faint and dejected. I took her hand, and hoped her slumber had been of service to her.

" She seemed not to notice my question, but,

putting the other hand on the book, she spoke, in an under-voice, the words of the author:—

> "I wake—
> How happy they who wake no more."

I saw she had been weeping over a miniature which always hung at her neck.

"I knew she was a widow, and that it was the picture of her husband. I took the book from her, and turning over the leaves, presented it to her, pointing to one passage—it was these words:—

> "But why more woe? more comfort let it be;
> Nothing is dead, but that which wish'd to die:
> Nothing is dead, but wretchedness and pain:
> Nothing is dead, but what encumbered, galled,
> Blocked up the pass, and barred from real life."

"She read it in silence, and returning me the book, thanked me, with a slight pressure

of the hand, and a mournful, yet heavenly smile."

"'You are right, my friend,' at length she said, 'I have been weak and repining this morning, but I think my mind is less to blame than my body.'

"She then said she felt herself a little better, and begging me to give her a manuscript which she pointed to, in a small cabinet, she sat up, and wrote for about half an hour: she then gave it to me to replace. She called to Charles, who stood at the window, and whom she had not addressed before, and kindly took his hand.

"'Those papers,' said she, 'are a bequest to you, as well as to your father.'

"He turned away his head, unable to speak.

"'Why,' continued she, 'embitter by useless regret these few hours that we may pass together? I leave you soon, I go a long journey; let us then be happy while I remain

with you. I shall indeed be happier soon, my friends, in a better country, yet I grieve to leave you. But the length of a life is but as a moment compared to eternity, and we shall meet again. Your emotion is still more painful than it is flattering to me—I beseech you, moderate it.'

"She then called me to her, and bidding me sit by her, she gave me long and particular directions about the little Hannah, her adopted child.

"After this she was completely exhausted. I had repeatedly entreated her to permit me to procure a physician, but without success; as she knew their skill could not be of the slightest service to her, and would only disturb her last moments. I also had plainly discerned, that this gradual decay had long since doomed her to the grave; I, therefore, would not force upon her advice that seemed so unpleasant.

"She had settled her few worldly affairs, and her soul had long been in preparation for its immortal change.

"The disconsolate Lucy only waited on her. A sainted peace reigned in her heart, and she waited calmly for her dissolution. I attended her to the last, and it was indeed the death-bed of the righteous. It was a moral scene, awful, affecting, yet cheering and glorious.

"The final moment fast approached—her breath became short and interrupted—for two hours she had not spoke. The poor orphan knelt by the couch of her benefactress. She was loud in her lamentations; prayed, wept, and sobbed alternately. At length the dying saint put forth her arm, and placed her hand on the child's head:—

"'Dear child,' said she—the little girl stopped, and eagerly listened—after a pause she resumed—'Pray, dear child, not for me,

but for those who may have injured me.—Those innocent prayers may save a guilty soul.' She then clasped her hands together, and looked upwards, as if praying herself: in this attitude she remained for near a quarter of an hour, while we all stood round her in awful silence.

"At length Lucy begged she would allow herself to be undressed and put to bed.

"'No,' said she, 'this couch shall be my last bed, for I will not lose sight of my friends any more.'

"A few moments after she begged her little Hannah might be put into her arms—she embraced her twice, blessed her, and then desired she might be sent out of the room: the child was pacified, and persuaded to take a walk. Her lamentations had disordered the dear lady. She then remained an hour perfectly quiet, while Lucy knelt by her pillow. At the end

of this time she enquired the hour. It was seven.

"'Another hour and I am at rest,' said she, in a faint voice. She guessed right. Some time after she called to me by name. She bade me adieu with a voice and manner, the remembrance of which even now shakes my soul. She then gave her hand to Charles—he kissed it, and watered it with tears. She did not withdraw it for some time. Her eyes grew dim—she hardly breathed. 'Lucy,' said she, with a slight trembling in her voice, as if nature involuntarily shuddered at death, 'farewell, best of creatures!' They were her last words. She leaned forward, and was received in the arms of the kneeling Lucy, where, in half a moment, she breathed a long and last sigh!"

The only remaining person of all those mentioned in these memoirs, Charles Denham, takes the liberty of adding, though he dares not continue the unfinished narrative of the Honourable Edward M——, that this unfortunate man took up his residence in his wife's cottage, where he ended his days, hoping to wake in glory.

ANNE.

A TALE OF SIMPLICITY AND TRUTH.

ANNE.

——— "Hast thou ever weighed a sigh?
Or studied the philosophy of tears?
Hast thou descended deep into the breast,
And seen their source?"

Has any philosopher, I ask—and there are enough, who have given themselves, who do give themselves, and who will give themselves that name,—is there any philosopher, I say, who has ever been able to define that subtle, secret, mysterious, capricious faculty, or quality in human beings, which goeth by the name of feeling, sentiment, sensibility, or

something to that effect? Has any one arrived at being able to trace it to its secret haunts, to mark it in its birth, to account for its incomprehensible waverings; or to point out the cause of its empire over the human heart?

In this chase I confess myself more completely lost and bewildered than I should have been in the famed Labyrinth of Egypt. I have so many various thoughts, such a strange medley of contradictory opinions, tumbling and jostling one another, that they leave my brain the very throne of anarchy and confusion.

Now, I must say, I don't like that—'tis not for an elderly gentleman of sixty to have his head turned upon any account, much less in a useless pursuit after the source and nature of his sensibilities. Why, said I to myself, as I sat by the side of a brook, splashing the water

with my cane, (which I always do when I am particularly occupied with my thoughts,) why was there not a little more order, or means for order, brought into the construction of my unfortunate brain. If I had been furnished with a few little convenient shelves, subdivided into cells, what a charming, neat arrangement I might have made of my thoughts. A few yards of cool steadiness to tie them up in bundles, in lieu of red tape, I would have disposed them upon the shelves, where I should have always found them ready at need, and I might have been Lord High Chancellor of England, instead of spending my little income of one hundred and fifty pounds, in an obscure village, with no other distinction than being reckoned a good politician by my honest neighbours.

One would imagine, from this commencement, that I intended to write a treatise upon

the art of digression, with exemplifications of the same; but this was not my design. I meant to express to you, most noble, wise, erudite, polite, or elegant reader, (for I address myself to none other)—I meant, as I said, to give you some idea of the confusion that reigned in my head, and which caused me to put pen to paper this day.

"That gives us an agreeable foretaste of the nature of this strange composition," says my reader, with a groan, turning over the leaves, to peep if there is any thing coming which may repay him for wading through the quagmire in which I have plunged him and myself.

But, if you interrupt me thus, I shall never get on. Heigh, ho! I begin to repent of my scheme already. Well, I will be as concise as possible.

I was thinking how wonderful are the hid-

den springs of our sensibilities, which, at one word, will sometimes gush out, overflowing at our eyes, and, at another moment, the most pompous display of woe, decked in all the pride of tragic language, will not produce one sigh. I have heard it remarked that we are generally most apt to afford our sympathy to *decorated distress*—if thou knowest what I mean by that expression, good reader.

Perhaps this may have some truth, when applied to the ladies; but I cannot plead guilty to having shed a tear at the best pages of any novel for five and thirty years back.

Five and thirty years! . . . . . Yes, I do think it is just that number of years since I read "The Memoirs of Miss Sydney Biddulph." I am afraid I must allow I did shed a few tears over them.

I am of a contemplative disposition. I love the study of nature and natural feeling.—When

I can discover, and extricate from the dross of ignorance and vulgarity one amiable sentiment, warm from the heart, I am more satisfied than a botanist at the discovery of a new plant.

The study of the human mind, out of oneself, is much the most easy in simple, uncultivated subjects.

I love to converse with my poorer neighbours—not to make a parade of my knowledge and wealth, which would, perhaps in higher circles, be but ignorance and poverty; but to enter into their feelings of pleasure and pain. The schoolmistress of our village, who might be called the prototype of Shenstone's inimitable heroine, is a particular favourite of mine. She has not the arrogance of power; for the pride of sway may be shewn even by those who only hold dominion over the bottoms of a dozen little boys. No, Dame Rutter has a

great soul—what is better, she has a feeling heart; and she holds the sceptre of her temporal power with a good and easy grace.

Last night I walked down to the end of the village, where her cottage is situated. She was sitting on a wooden bench before the door, and one of her subjects, with a rueful countenance, sat at her feet, with his well-thumbed book in his hand.

"Your servant, my good dame," said I, as I opened the wicker gate, "shall I come in? Are you in a humour for a chat to-night?"

"Aye, aye, come in, sir, you're always welcome, you know, and it's kind of you to cheer old Martha's heart up a bit;" saying which she lifted her basket and knitting implements off the bench to make room for me.

"But you've got a companion to-night, dame? How does it happen that Tom is not with his companions on the green?"

"Lazy, lazy, that's always the complaint against him, Doctor—he'll never be good for any thing."

The unfortunate scholar, looking up to her with a sad countenance, said, "But I will be good now—I have my lesson quite well now—pray, mistress, hear me."

"No, no, child; look it over again, and I'll hear you to-morrow morning:" and while she spoke, she was picking out of a huge bag some lumps of sugar-candy for the recreant youth. Turning to me, she said—"Do, Doctor, let me hear the news; have you seen the papers to-day? I long so to hear about Sir F—— B——. God forgive him! I hope they won't do him any harm. A little lecture will do him good. I sometimes find it of more service than a whipping, with my young people."

I smiled at the parallel she drew.

"Bess, Bess!" cried the little boy. "Pray,

mistress, let me go and fetch a bit of bread for poor Bess."

"Go, child."

Away flew Tommy, while Bess, a favourite black sheep of the dame's, came rubbing its head on her knee, and licked her hand.

Sir F—— was forgotten while she looked at the boy kneeling beside Bess, and with one arm round her neck feeding her.

"Aye, poor Bess, you've had whiter hands than those about your black neck once; but there's a change in Fortune's wheel ofttimes, and poor Bess knows it."

"If ever Bess has changed her condition, it must have been for the better, since she is with you, dame. But I am sure I have seen her following you about ever since I came to this place, and that is four years next Martinmas."

"Aye, so you have; she and I have been

five years here together; and a dear, faithful creature she is. I like that sense in these brute beasts—even a sheep knows who loves it."

"You seem very fond of her, good dame."

"Ah," said she, with a sigh, "she and I are old friends; and, besides, I love her for sake's sake. Here, Tommy, eat this sugar-candy, and take a bit to your little sister: then you may go and play on the green. But mind and be a good boy to-morrow—have your lesson at your fingers' ends, or don't show yourself to me."

Away flew Tommy, and Bess lay down at the feet of her mistress.

"What makes you say you love your pet for sake's sake, dame? Did your sweetheart present her to you, with a garland of roses about her neck?"

"Oh, now, Doctor, you always jeer me so.

No, no, my time for sweethearts has been gone this many a long day."

"Well, but, dame, tell me why you prize Bess so much. That's to say, if it's no secret."

"Lord bless you!—secret! It's no secret. She belonged to a sweet young woman that I was very fond of, and, when she died, I took her pet as a keepsake. That's what made me say that Bess had had whiter hands about her neck than Tommy's. She had lovely white hands and arms, sweet Anne! How I have seen her fondle her black favourite! I'll tell you what, Doctor: I had one secret, for I was always ashamed of saying it, for fear the people here about should laugh at me. I will tell it to you; I do not know why, but I feel as if you would not laugh at me. Do you know why I left V——?"

"No; do tell me."

"You know it is a great way off—almost forty miles. I had a comfortable bit of a house there, which I was obliged to give up when my husband died. I had the offer of another, but, as I was to change, I chose to leave the place. I will tell you the truth. I could not bear to stay at V——, where poor Anne died. Every time I hobbled to church, leaning on my stick, I had to pass the grave of the sweet creature. I used to think it would have been better if I had been lying there than she. Poor Anne! she was buried on her birthday —only one-and-twenty! But, God's will be done."

The old woman's voice, which had faltered as she spoke, sunk almost to a whisper, as she finished the last sentence.

"Who was this Anne, whom you appear to have been so fond of, Martha?"

"She was much above my station of life,

but I loved her as if she had been my daughter. Oh, I have not fine words at command, but I am sure she was precious to my heart. She was like a young flower that I had seen budding before my eyes. It seems foolish to talk so, but my heart overflows when I think of her—I cannot tell how I loved her. I had lived at V—— ever since I was married. The Curate died about two years after I came there, and good Mr. Albin succeeded. Oh, I never saw such a dear old man; but I speak of him more as he is now than he was then, for he was not old-looking, though he was a fine, portly, comely man as you would wish to see; yet, to have looked at him when he was old was the thing. I could have thought he was like Abraham. He had just the look of one of the patriarchs, with his kind, heavenly face, and his white locks hanging over it. He had just such a calm look as if he

had been in heaven already; and he was so good to the poor!

"What a lovely family he had when he came to V——. Three beautiful daughters—Jane, Helen, and Anne; and two charming boys—Lawrence and William. Lawrence was a year older than the second daughter, and William a year younger than Anne, who was only three years old when she came to V——.

"I loved to see those sweet innocents trudging to church when they were a little older—dear little things. They used to come and sit in my house often and often, after church-time: their mamma always gave them leave. Mrs. Albin was as amiable a woman as I ever knew. She was very kind to me, and often had me at her house. I was not then in such a poor way as I am now, Doctor. She would not have been ashamed to talk to me coming out of church. I used to teach them fine nee-

dlework, and dear Anne was always the most quick and clever. Ah, there was nothing she would not have learnt, that was in the power of mortal to teach her; so modest withal, she neither knew she was beautiful nor clever."

"Now, do, good Martha, tell me what this wonder was like. I should like vastly to hear you describe her."

"Describe her! That would indeed be no easy matter; and at any rate, I am not worthy of the office. Ah! she was such a one as you will never see, and as I never shall again. Though I were to tell you exactly what she was like, that would not give you the least idea of her. It was when she spoke—above all, when she smiled—that she had such an expression. She must have had something very taking in her, for the great, as well as the simple country folks thought she was far beyond anything they had ever seen; and her

manners too were very uncommon. Not like some fine London ladies that I have seen, full of airs and affectations, and not like our village beauties either; but just a way of her own that made every body respect and love her. It was wonderful to see the regard all her companions had for her, though she was uncommonly merry, always laughing, always lively: she was the delight of her parents' hearts too.

"This excellent couple were always anxious to make their children happy; never refusing them any innocent gratification, and even promoting their diversions. They were well repaid for it: indeed their children did love them dearly.

"What a happy house that was! I never went into it but I heard singing or laughing, except it was on a Sunday.

"Then the young people would come out

and meet me; all running to me, and jumping about me, calling me—'Dear dame,' 'Good Martha,' and what not: so kind as they were I shall never forget it. They led a very cheerful life, for it was always a house full of young people. Besides the three girls and their brothers, there was a tutor who was but a few years older than them; and another youth, who used to be instructed too by the tutor. You know his father and Mr. Albin had him between them, because neither of them could have afforded it any other way. But he lived in the house of the clergyman. It was said that the young ladies learnt almost as much as their brothers: I do believe they knew a great many languages, but I am no judge. This charming society was never separated; all the young people were so tenderly united, from living altogether. It was a pleasure to see the goodly troop; where one was, the rest

were sure not to be far off. The whole seven used to walk out together, every fine summer evening. It was such a disappointment to them if they could not go. Often and often have I stood at my door, looking after them as they walked down the village. It did my heart good to see them so merry, and at night I would watch for them as they came back, and then, whether they would or no, they must step in, and taste my new milk and cream cheeses. Ah, these were happy times, Doctor!"

"And tell me, dame, what sort of a young man was the tutor?"

"Oh, a brave, clever man. They say he even wrote books. I used to think he had a sort of liking to Miss Helen Albin, the second daughter. He had sweet mild black eyes, and so had she. But, of all the boys, my favourite was Harry Ewin, the lad who took lessons

with Mr. Albin's sons: he was so elegant, and withal good-natured and obliging. But indeed they were all that.

"I remember one evening, about dusk, Harry Ewin and Anne Albin came running down to my cottage. She was quite out of breath when she came in, and throwing off a large cloak she had about her, I was surprised to see her so fine.—'Dear Miss Anne,' said I, 'what brings you down here so late, and why are you so smart?'

"'We are come here to carry you away, Granny,' said she, for they often called me Granny, though I was no more related to them, than I am to you; but it was by way of kindness. We are so happy to-night, we have got a number of friends at the Parsonage, and we are to have a little dance. Will it not be charming?—But when we were all going to begin, we said there's somebody wanting; and

then Henry said, 'O yes! we want Granny: I will not dance with any body but Granny,' so off we flew to fetch you, and you must come directly.'

"'O, but, Miss Annie, I cannot run so fast as you,' said I, 'and besides you must wait till I put on a better gown, and a clean cap.'

"'Don't be so coquettish, Miss Martha,' said dear Harry, who was always fond of his joke, 'you know I shall love you just as well as if you had your white silk wedding gown on, and your face looks quite pretty in that cap;—so come away, nobody shall find fault with Miss Martha, if I'm pleased.'

"There were the dear creatures hopping about me, and pulling away till I was just obliged to go as they would have me, and I thought they would have killed me with running till we got to the Parsonage.

"The company was all set out on a little

green, behind the house in the garden; it was finely lit up: they had a blind fiddler, and a nice supper under the arbour; it really looked gay.

"Harry would needs have it, that I must dance with him; so, to please the poor dear, I got up and hobbled a few steps, and then sat down, giving him Anne for a partner; and they did look charming, dancing together, sweet children.

"I forgot to tell you, that the ball was given for Anne's birthday; she was just sixteen that day, and Harry was about the same age: I thought I never saw her look so well before. She was dressed all in white, but very smart and nice, and round about her fair curling hair, which almost hung into her eyes, she had a wreath of natural flowers; she was very tall and elegant, and looked more beautiful than I can say, when she danced. There were several pretty

girls there, besides her sisters, but none to compare to her. Her parents sat looking so happy, at seeing their children well amused, and good Mrs. Albin had almost the tears in her eyes with pleasure, when I praised her dear pretty Anne. There was some nice couples too, besides her and Harry; there was her sister Helen, and Mr. White, the tutor, whom I said was fond of her; there was her brother Lawrence, and a Miss Frances Delaney, a great friend of Anne's, a very pretty girl. She had been once on the point of marrying a Mr. Moore, whom they said she had jilted. I saw nothing like jilting about her; she was a very fine girl.

"She had never given any reason for her not chusing to marry that man, after it had been all settled, and she appeared far more pleased with Mr. Lawrence; however, that was after the breaking off of her marriage. Mr. Moore

seemed vastly taken with Anne, and paid her great attention: he had quite the manners of the town beau; but though he was handsome, I did not like him the better; however, it is wrong to say that, for I have never known any harm of him.

"Not but what my dear precious Anne might perhaps have been alive now, had it not been for him."

"What do you mean, dame?"

"Oh, I don't know: it is wicked to think so. He was always fond of her, and kind as possible."

"What, did she marry him?"

"Ah, that she did, poor sweet creature!—it was a sad, sad day, when I first heard of it. I wish he had never seen her."

"How came she to marry him? If you say that it was so sad, I suppose you mean that she married him against her will?"

"No, that she did not: her excellent parents would not have forced her to do any thing disagreeable to herself. She married him with her own free will: at least——"

"At least what?"

"She engaged herself with her own free will: indeed to be sure she need not have married him, unless she liked it herself. However there is no saying: this is a sad world."

"What do you mean, good dame? do speak out."

"Why I really cannot tell, for nobody knows how all these disagreeable things came about exactly. Only I suspect, if Miss Frances Delany had been with her friend at the time, it would never have happened. You must know, that Harry Ewin went away, I believe, to London, to learn to be a lawyer, and then Mr. Moore was invited to pay a visit at the Parsonage for some days; for he was a

gentleman very much liked in those parts. Well, it seems he grew fonder and fonder of Miss Anne, as he saw more of her, but nobody said any thing of her liking him; then he went away, and we thought no more of him. About half a year after, he came back, and I thought nothing of it, till Miss Frances Delany, who was lately returned from a visit to her aunt in the neighbouring town, came down to my cottage. I was all struck, when I saw her, she looked so aghast and sorrowful: I turned quite frightened, and could hardly ask her what was the matter. She sat down without speaking a word, and clasping her hands on her knees, she raised them up every now and then, as if she did not know what to do. 'What ails my dear young lady?' said I, 'God forbid that any thing should have happened at the Parsonage.' 'Happened,' said she, 'would to God I had never seen such

happening! Oh, that I should ever have lived to see this day! Oh, poor, poor foolish Anne, and poor Lawrence!' I was then so alarmed that I could only take her hand, and give her a look, to beg she would explain. 'Oh, Mrs. Martha, if I had been consulted, this dreadful thing would not have been done: O mercy, mercy, what do you think Anne has done? You could never believe it: she has positively engaged herself to Mr. Moore!—Oh, poor dear girl, she does not know what she has done.'

I was surprised too, but I was glad it was no worse; he was reckoned a good sort of man, and had an easy fortune. I began thinking that Miss Frances was sorry she had not taken him herself. 'Dear ma'am,' said I, 'I don't think this is any thing terrible: I am sure Miss Anne's parents will not be against it; Mr. Albin is very fond of him.' 'O yes,' said she, 'good souls, they will be quite pleas-

ed—God forbid that their eyes ever should be opened; no, no, that will never happen. But poor Anne herself, miserable girl! she will live to repent it—and Lawrence—it will go near to break his heart. Look ye, Mrs. Martha, the first thing Anne did, when I went to see her after her return, was to call me out into the garden, to tell me a secret, and it was that dreadful secret; I could have told her a secret too. O dear, dear, and Anne was looking so pretty, and so merry.' Here Miss Frances burst into tears, and sobbed for a long time, then she went on :—'O, it was terrible to see her so cheerful, after what she had done. She did not observe how shocked I was; and I asked her if her father and mother knew of it. She said not, for that she was ashamed to mention it; but she knew they would have no objection; she had solemnly engaged herself that morning.'

"'Do you think, Miss Frances,' said I, 'that she is fond of Mr. Moore?'

"'Ah, poor girl, I suppose she fancies she is just now. You know he has such a way with him, something so insinuating, that, unless a person was on their guard, he would persuade them they were in love with him, whether or not they were.'

"'Indeed?'

"'O yes: but it's no use mourning now; there will be enough mourning by-and-bye. I cannot tell this to the parents, and Anne asked me to do so—I really don't know what to say about it.—I wish, Mrs. Martha, you would go and break it to them; I really could not; I am sure I should burst out a crying if I was to see them rejoiced at it.'

"'It would be quite improper that I should tell them. You ought to advise dear Miss Anne to tell her elder sister.'

" 'Indeed,' says Miss Frances, rising, 'that is the best thing, and the sooner it's done the better.'

" Well, after she was gone I sat down to muse on what she had said, and not by any means could I understand the cause of all her grief.

" Now do you know, Doctor, to this day I could never discover what she meant by those odd expressions. It was a mystery that will never be cleared."

" Surely," interrupted I, " she must have known something about Mr. Moore, which nobody else was acquainted with. I think you said that Miss Delaney was once upon the point of marrying Mr. Moore? She certainly knew more than she chose to tell."

" But, if she knew anything against him, really, why did not she tell Anne, whom she was so fond of?"

" I remember you said that Miss Delany had

regretted to you, that she had not been consulted upon it; I suppose she would have told her friend, then; but, you know, if she was already engaged, it would have been only distressing her for no use. At least that is the only way I can account for it.

"But I am interrupting you, good dame—pray go on, and tell me if Miss Anne's brother was there, and if he knew of it?"

"He was told of it with the rest, and he did not seem particularly pleased; but I fancy two months after, just before he was going to India, Miss Delany told him what she would not tell me. I heard after, that he had privately said to his sister, that if she persisted in marrying Mr. Moore, he would never speak to her or see her again. It seems she remonstrated, and said it was impossible, that she had gone too far, and could not recede, as her promise was solemnly given: well, after a

great deal of disputing, he left her, saying he would rather see her a corpse, than Mr. Moore's wife. Her eldest sister found her drowned in tears, after Lawrence had left her, and it was from her I heard it; but I am certain her brother did not give any reason for his aversion to Mr. Moore.

"Ah! poor Anne, she was, indeed, in a pitiable situation; on one hand, her brother making use of every argument to prevent her from marrying; on the other Mr. Moore was not accused of any thing: her parents approved the match; it was a settled thing, and could not be broke off.

"But her happiness was destroyed, poor girl; she loved her brother better than any creature living, and she knew that she should displease him everlastingly, yet it was her duty to fulfil her engagement, and her duty she was resolved to do."

"What was Harry Ewin doing all this time, Martha?"

"He was studying in London, I fancy; and I am sure he must have studied hard, for I never saw a mortal so changed. He returned for a short time to his father's house, about six months after Anne had been engaged to Mr. Moore.

"There had been a report some time before that he had fallen in love with a rich heiress, only daughter to a merchant, who had promised to give his consent to the marriage, as soon as he was twenty, for he was only eighteen then; but this was all a lie, for when he came back, it turned out, that he had never heard of such a person. Anne got two or three letters from Lawrence before he left England, all upon the subject of her marriage, using every inducement of threats and prayers to make her break it off. Her answer was always the

same: she said she would sooner die, than displease her brother, but that she must act rightly, even though she were to lose that dear brother's affection. Many fine things were said about it, but I have not the knack of remembering phrases. Poor Anne was indeed a changed being: there was never a smile to be seen upon her face: I am sure she nearly repented the promise she had given Mr. Moore. She would not break off with him, but she always put off and off, as if to gain time, and I could not even see she was at all fond of him; when Lawrence left England, just before sailing, he wrote farewell letters to his two eldest sisters, and his brother William, but not a word did he send to his favourite sister, his poor Anne.

"I saw her heart was like to break, when the rest got their letters, but she did not allow herself one complaint; she had a wonderful deal of fortitude for such a young creature, though

I one day saw her quite overset by a song: she was always uncommonly fond of music, and so was her father; he was particularly partial to sacred music, and as Miss Jane, the eldest, had a very grand voice, and Mr. White played charming on the flute, they used to have plenty of fine music.

"They knew I dearly loved a song, when it was not in a light, graceless style. Well, I was up there one evening to tea, and Miss Albin was desired to sing; poor Anne was sitting as doleful, never uttering a word, and I thought to myself, what a sad change a few months had made in her. Harry began saying something kind to me, when good Mr. Albin called to him to be silent, as Jane was going to sing, and as he was leaving them all on the next day, he might not have an opportunity of hearing her, for many a year.

"I can never forget the song—it was always a

favourite of mine: it was what Jephtha's daughter is supposed to sing, before she is to be sacrificed. You remember the story in the bible; well, the song is called "*Farewell, ye limpid streams:*" it is very beautiful. There is one *Farewell* in it, that sounds just as if a person was sighing; it always made me start. When Miss Jane came to that, poor Anne was just struck with it, and in an instant she burst into tears.

"Every one was quite surprised, for it was so unlike her; but Mr. Moore paid her such attention, and seemed so concerned, that it was easy to see how much he loved her. It was no secret to any body that they were going to be married, so it did not signify; she was the first to laugh at herself for her folly, and from that moment, she appeared gayer than before, which delighted her parents, who did not know how much sorrow her brother had given her.

"Three weeks after, Anne Albin was married to Mr. Moore, and taken to his house. He had a genteel small estate, fifty miles from her native village; it was wonderful to see how little she appeared affected at her wedding. Indeed I thought she was in higher spirits, than she had been for some months; but not the same sweet careless gaiety she formerly had. Half the village were in tears the day she went; her father and mother were very sorry to part with her, but they thought she was going to be quite happy. Ah! I will say again, I wish she had never seen Mr. Moore.

"Well, the village was quite dreary without her, and my greatest comfort used to be, going to the parsonage, when I heard there was any letter from dear Anne Moore. She used always to write charming, amusing letters; one would have thought she was quite happy.

"Not long after Mr. Albin's eldest daughter

married very happily to an Irishman, who took her over to Dublin, soon after her marriage. There was only Helen left, who was almost always employed attending her mother, then in weak health. At last poor Mrs. Moore wrote to me, to beg I would go and see her, for she said her husband, who was fond of farming, was always out, and that as she could not be so active as she once was, she was left almost always alone, and that I should be a great comfort to her.

"You may be sure I was glad enough to go, and my husband never said no to any thing I liked, so away I went, and arrived at her house the next day. To be sure when I looked at the nice house, and pretty grounds, I thought her condition was bettered, but I thought very different when I saw her dear self. She was delighted to see me again, and she cried when she said, I put her in mind of her dear home, it

was so long since she had seen any of her old friends; and then she asked so fondly after her dear father and mother and sisters; I am sure I found she was not changed in heart. I never could perceive she gave way to any dejection, but her mirth seemed always forced, and I thought she had a look about the corners of her mouth, as if she felt ready to cry. She had got a hollow look about her eyes too, which she never used to have. Mr. Moore was always kind to her, and she appeared grateful and attentive to him, yet I could see she was not happy, though it was not the same sort of dejection as she had before her marriage. She seemed now like a person that had nothing to hope, and was resigned. She would not hear a word against her husband though, and if I ever ventured to beg of her to tell me if she was happy, she always protested that Mr. Moore did every thing for her comfort that she could wish.

No, never to her dying day would she allow that he had not been the best, the kindest husband.

"I had not been there many days, when a person called at her house, with a letter from her father. He was a respectable elderly gentleman, and she invited him to remain all night in the house. I thought he looked very strangely at her, and I fancy she thought so too, for she was very sharp. She had not read three lines of her father's letter, which seemed very long, when, to my great surprise, she turned about, and, seizing the stranger's arm, she said, 'tell me this moment, tell me what has happened.'

"He looked at her with pity, and said, 'your eldest brother is no more.'

"'Oh God!' said she, clasping her hands together, 'and he died cursing me!'

"'No, no, indeed he did not,' said the stran-

ger with eagerness; 'he remembered you, and no one else. He died almost instantaneously, of a fall from his horse—I was with him. 'Go to my sister, my dear sister Anne,' said he, 'tell her I forgive her—bear her my blessing—you will go yourself?' said he, squeezing my hand—I had hardly given an assent, when he expired.'

"O if you had seen her face then! it made the tears pour over my cheeks. She looked at the stranger for a moment, to wait if he would say more. All the colour rushed from her face in a moment; then she grew like scarlet, and at last she burst into tears, saying, 'blessings, a thousand blessings on him, for remembering me!'

"She seemed pretty composed for a little while, and read her father's letter twice over; but very soon after she was taken with fainting fits, and put to bed. She was very near her lying-in,

and the distress of mind accelerated it. I was glad Mr. Moore was not in the house, when the strange gentleman came, for he had never heard the reason of Lawrence's coolness towards his sister, and I thought it was as well he did not see the gentleman. When he came home, he found his wife very ill, and the next she was delivered of a little girl, to the great joy of Mr. Moore. I wrote to her parents directly, and as soon as Miss Frances Delaney heard of it she came to see her dear Anne. As soon as she was partly recovered, I left her, as she had her friend with her, and it made me miserable to see the state of spirits she was in.

"Miss Delaney could not leave her father long, and she returned after having been there a fortnight. From that time I did not often hear of Mrs. Moore, and when I did, it was not comfortable intelligence; she was in a

weak state of health, and grew worse instead of better. She had confessed to me, that she did not like her husband's country place, and latterly she quite took a sick fancy against it; persons that have been always used to live in one place, get a wonderful attachment to it, and if they are in weak health, they sometimes take a thought that they cannot live any where else.

"That was the case with Anne, so that at last her husband brought her back to the parsonage, the second spring after she had left it. I had not seen her for eight months, and to have looked at her, I might have imagined that we had not met for ten years. Oh, I cannot tell you what she was like; pray excuse me, for I think I see her at this moment; ah! there was a sad, sad alteration; I had not seen her five moments before I said to myself, 'you are not

long for this world.' Indeed she looked too much like an angel, for any creature here below.

"You may be sure I ran out to meet her : the carriage could not drive up to the parsonage door, so that she had about twenty yards to walk. I gave her my arm, for Mr. Moore had ran on before to tell her parents that she was coming. She walked very slowly, and turned about often, looking at every place and thing she had been used to see.

"'Every thing here is just as it used to be, nothing changed,' said she, with a deep sigh.

"Ah! thought I, there is nothing changed but you!

"'Well, dear granny,' said she, 'you cannot have the least idea of the wild joy I felt when I came in sight of this dear village. I am quite surprised at myself for feeling so

happy. But do you know what gave me more pleasure than all the rest?'

"'No, what was it?' said I.

"Instead of answering, she pointed her finger towards the churchyard, which we were passing, and then looked at me with such a smile. I can never forget it.

"I tried to speak, but could not. Then she went on. 'Perhaps you'll think me very foolish, Martha, when I tell you that one of my greatest uneasinesses at home, was, that I should not get here in time, and that I should be buried in B—— churchyard; I never looked at it without feeling all my blood freeze. At last I could not bear ever to pass that way. All my desire is to be laid in this dear spot. This must appear very foolish to one in health, but nobody knows till they lose their strength, what strange passions, and eagernesses, one

takes; I am sure I should not have had peace in my last moments if I had died at B——.'

"O, Doctor, it was hard, it was like to break my heart, to hear Anne talk so quietly of her expecting death, in the very spot where I had a thousand times seen her, laughing and jumping about, such a short time before. I do not remember what I said to her, I was so shocked; but it was not much, for we had got to the door of the parsonage. At the corner of the house there was a pretty turf seat, where she used to sit in the summer evenings and work.

"She gave it a look, and said—'Dear Lawrence made that seat for me, a short time before he——' she was going to say, 'quarrelled with me,' but she took herself up, and added, 'before I displeased him. I hope I shall never displease any body again.'

"At that moment Mrs. Albin flew out, and

embraced her daughter. Mr. Albin followed close behind. He started back when he saw Anne; she perceived in a moment that he was shocked, so she ran to him with as much gaiety as she used to have before her marriage, calling him her dear papa, and inventing all the little fun she could think of to amuse him, and put him off from thinking of her. Then Mr. Moore brought her little girl, and she put her in Mr. Albin's arms; afterwards she gave her to her mother, and said, 'she is called after you, dear mother; and she must learn to make friends with you, poor little thing.' I guessed well what she meant by that, but nobody seemed to understand her. Then when she saw her sister Helen, I almost thought she would have been overpowered, but she made a great effort, because her father was there. Then to be sure her black pet Bess came running in, and knew her again. It was a heart-sore to

her also; for it was Lawrence that had reared it, and given it to her, before her marriage. Then she asked after every body, and Harry Ewin amongst the rest.

"Poor fellow, I forgot to tell you that he had ruined his health with study, having been always delicate, and he had been at home for more than a year in a slow decline. She knew that he was very ill; but I was shocked when she asked the question, because her disorder was just like his, and I was afraid it would strike her so much, hearing that his case was hopeless; however, when her father told her, she did not seem much affected; but said—'Poor Harry, I must go and see him.'

"Her journey, and the meeting of her friends, had exhausted her so much, that her mother made her go to bed directly. When she was in bed, Mrs. Albin brought her the child to bid it good night; and as she kissed it, and gave it

back into the old lady's arms, she took her hand, and said—'Mother, you'll take care of little Anne, won't you?'

"Mrs. Albin looked quite distrest, as if she was afraid to understand her, and could not help it; but she pretended not to take her meaning, and said—'Go to sleep, dear child, and be under no apprehension, she shall sleep in my own room.' Anne sighed as her mother closed the curtain.

"I remained in the room to sit up with my dear Anne, till she should be asleep. She remained quiet for half an hour, and then suddenly she started up, and drawing the curtain, she said—'Dear Martha, I hear Frances coming in at the house door; I hear her whispering; she won't come up, she will be afraid to disturb me—oh, go for her, do go for her.'

"'Pray compose yourself, dear,' said I, 'I do not hear any noise.'

"'But I do, I do,' said she, throwing herself back with violence, 'will nobody go for her? O, how cruel, how hard.'

"To be sure, when I saw her so eager, I went down to satisfy her, and indeed there I found Miss Delany, though how she could have heard her, I cannot conceive. So the young lady followed me up, and Miss Helen and I staid at the door. The moment Miss Delany got to the bedside, Anne threw her arms about her neck, and not a word could she say, but 'Frances! my own, own Frances! But if you had heard the sound of her voice, I am sure you could not have kept from tears. There was something so mournful, yet pleased in it. Then she was keen for beginning to talk with her, but Miss Frances would not let her fatigue herself; but sat without speaking till she was asleep.

"From that time I insisted upon waiting on

Anne myself, and would not allow her to have any attendant but me. Yet she could not bear to have much fuss made with her.

"She used to rise in the daytime just like any one in health, though I thought she was far fitter for her bed. I never saw such a spirit as she had; as fast as her body seemed to decay, so much did her spirit rise. To hear her talk in the drawing-room, one would have thought she was in the strongest health. She had got back all her gaiety. There she would sit and make fun with her father, just as she used to do in her young days, for she always had an amazing sharp wit. But her mirth had an odd effect upon me, for it often sent me out of the room crying. Her father, poor old man, was never deceived by it either: she found that out; and she used to devise all sorts of methods to mislead him. She used to watch every opportunity to bring in any thing of that

sort; she would talk of what she expected would happen years after that; she would make plans for her daughter's education, and say that she would teach her every thing herself. All those kinds of things she used to watch opportunities of saying, and bring them in, with such a sly manner, that I was quite surprised. All would not do, for she could not conceal that she was declining, and losing her strength every day."

"Tell me, dame, did she go to see Harry Ewin, as she had said she would?"

"O yes, I quite forgot to tell you. Poor Harry could not move out of the house; but she walked to see him. There was he lying on a couch, as pale as any corpse, his body emaciated like a perfect shadow; yet he looked still beautiful, and his dark eyes sparkled most wonderfully. To see him extended on

the couch, and Anne sitting by him: it was such a sight as I hope never to see again. Two such lovely young creatures, as I may say, dropping into their graves. They had both so much the same appearance, except that she had a very bright colour; their hands, which were clasped together, so white and so thin, one might almost have seen through them. Yet they were both so cheerful, I could not have believed it. There they were, chatting away, as unconcernedly as you or I should be. They were putting each other in mind of their childish games, their little tricks, and all the amusements they had together. She sat an hour and a half there, and poor Mr. Ewin, Harry's father, was quite delighted to see his son in such spirits.

"When Anne rose to get up and take leave of him, Harry took her hand. 'Farewell!' said

he, 'my dear Anne; I am sorry to see you go, but this parting is not so unpleasant as some that we have had.'

"'No,' said she, 'we shall so soon meet again, dear Harry.' She gave a sweet smile, but her voice faltered: I saw they understood each other well.

"In this world they never met again!

"As we walked back to the parsonage, I wanted to avoid the road that led by the churchyard, but Anne, who was leaning on Helen too, would not be turned away, and so I was obliged to submit. When we came to it, Anne said, let us walk in; and though I winked to her sister, she did not understand me.

"The churchyard of V—— is indeed a sweet spot, all surrounded with immense plane trees, oaks, and beeches. Anne stopped and looked about her. 'Ah, poor dear Lawrence,' said

she, 'I wish he had been brought home and buried here.' Miss Helen shed tears.

"'Helen,' said her sister, 'will you remember what I say to you? Come here, look at this fine beech tree: I will be laid there, with my head next to the tree.'

"Oh, how her poor sister sobbed and cried; I thought she would have gone into a fit.

"Anne took hold of her arm. 'My dearest Helen,' said she, 'is it possible that you do not know that I must soon have a grave somewhere? Can you really imagine that life is for me? No, believe me, I feel the contrary, and it is with pleasure I think I shall be lying there, in that very spot, that sweet spot that I show you, when you pass to go to church, six or seven Sundays after this. But let us sit down a while, I shall like to sit where I am so soon to lie.'

"She was right, poor dear; that very day,

which was Tuesday, five weeks after, I saw her laid in her grave, under that beech tree! I, who had nursed her in these old arms, followed her to her last home; oh, that ever I should have lived to see such a day!"

The old woman could not go on; both she and I shed a plenteous stream of unaffected sorrow to the memory of Anne.

When I found my voice, I made some enquiries relating to her last moments.

"It is a most unaccountable thing," said the dame, "that from the time she was forced to take to her bed, she could not bear to have her husband in the room; she did not even like to see her child."

"How very odd! what could be the reason?"

"It might be because he was so violently affected, that it overset her—she could not bear to be exposed to emotion. And her for-

titude forsook her always when her child was brought to her. That's the only reason I could ever see.

"She suffered monstrously, and hardly ever slept at night; she used to groan often when she thought her mother or I were out of the room. She grew evidently weaker every day. One evening she said to me, 'Martha, I want to see my little girl.' Mrs. Albin, who was in the room, heard her, and brought the child to her bedside. 'Give her to me on the bed,' said Anne. 'But I hardly see her, pray undraw the curtains, and open the shutters.' The room had been dark for many days before. When the windows were opened the sun was just setting; as she lifted the child in her arms the yellow beams were shining in its little eyes. How like an angel the mother looked! Never did I see any thing so beautiful. Her face was like white marble,

and she had still a little mark of colour in her cheeks, like a rose. Her eyes were bent downwards on the child's face. She remained a moment without moving; then raising her sweet eyes to her mother, she said, 'Mamma, will you love this little one as you loved your own Anne?' The poor mother could only make a sign, for she was choked with sobs. Then Anne pressed her child to her heart, and held it there for a moment, while her eyes were raised as if she was praying: she gave the child into her mother's arms, and never saw it again!

"She lay quite exhausted for about an hour, and then said to her sister, 'I want to see Mr. Moore.' When Helen went for him, she said to me, 'sit by the bed, dear Granny, don't leave me if you love me the least, but give me your hand;' she took it and held it tight; when she heard Mr. Moore's

footstep, she suddenly said, 'not yet, don't let him in yet;' and the bed shook with the violence of her trembling. There she lay, still holding my hand, and hers shaking in it. After she had continued that way a quarter of an hour, she said, 'now he may come in.'

"'I only want to wish you good night, Mr. Moore,' said she.

"He stooped down and kissed her forehead, 'good night, dear love,' said he.

"She sank back after that, and did not speak a word. From that time I could only tell that she was alive by her breathing. The next day her father, mother, brother, and sister embraced her, and took leave of her, but she did not show the least signs of knowing any thing. The third morning the child was brought to the door; she heard it, and waved her hand to put it away. The next night about eleven o'clock we were making her bed.

Miss Delany, who never left her, lifted her always back and forward. She was putting her in, when Anne put her arms about her neck, said, 'dear, dear Frances!' kissed her cheek, and breath left her for ever!

"Harry Ewin expired an hour and a half after!"

THE FATE OF FLORA.

A LEGEND.

" And man, whose heaven erected face
The smiles of love adorn,—
Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn."

BURNS'S DIRGE.

THE

FATE OF FLORA.

It was autumn, and the increased freshness of the evening air induced Fanny to close the Venetian window of the saloon, although it opened on a verdant and wooded bank, skirted by the troubled waters of the British Channel. The view was indeed beautiful, but, alas! it was no longer new! If she did not behold it with indifference, it was at least with the calm of uninterrupted possession. Even the soft

air of the Isle of Wight chilled the delicate frame of Fanny Seymour, and drawing a chair to the fire, she took up a book, over which she presently closed her eyes.

"Asleep! and lulled by a novel!" said her father, as he entered the room. "You will forgive my yawning over one, I suppose, in future."

Fanny aroused, was willing to lay the fault on her own stupidity, and to defend her favourite reading, but the appearance of a stranger, who followed Mr. Seymour, arrested her words, and she arose in silence to receive him.

The stranger was advanced in life, of a tranquil and placid appearance. He was a native of Scotland, who had been brought up in penury, but was now arrived at affluence, partly from his own exertions, and partly from having lately come into possession of a pro-

perty, which, when first he entered upon the theatre of the world, was no less than eleven lives distant from him. All, however, had fallen; and, altered in no degree by this unexpected accession of wealth, the self-contented and self-controlled M'Donald continued to pass his days in the bosom of his native country, in the same peaceful and methodical manner his father had done before him. The birth of a grandson induced him to visit the metropolis of England at this period, for his daughter-in-law had determined to lie-in there, as an excuse for partaking of some of the diversions of a place she had been rarely suffered to visit. Mr. M'Donald was a well-informed but not a polished man. The people he met in London he despised as ignorant and affected, whilst they objected to the roughness of his manners, and that strong national accent which marked his speech, and which,

even if he had attempted to subdue, was too firmly established by long usage to be now eradicated. He quickly perceived that the inhabitants of the new sphere into which he had been introduced treated him as a person who knows nothing, simply because he knew not their forms, and was disposed to despise their fancies. He had no difficulty, therefore, in accepting the invitation of a friend and countryman to spend some time in Hampshire. There, he heard much of the beauties of the Isle of Wight, and although secretly of opinion that nothing could be beautiful out of Scotland, he was too cautious, as well as too considerate of the feelings of others, to hint at such an idea before a party of English folks, and agreed to accompany a young man, whose description of the island had pleased him, on a tour round this garden of England. He left his companion at St. Boniface, in the

southern part of the isle, and proceeded afterwards to the romantic cottage of Mr. Seymour, with whom he had been formerly acquainted. That gentleman met him as he was taking his evening's walk, and bringing him home with him, introduced him to his daughter.

Mr. M'Donald took up the book that had shed its soporific influence over Miss Seymour. "'Self-Indulgence,'" said he. "Is this a new book?—I need not ask if it is a stupid one, since I have been a witness to its lethargic influence."

"Indeed," said Fanny, warming in defence of her favourite recreation, and taking up the cause of novels in general, rather than that particular one which had provoked her slumber, "it is a pretty and an elegant work, and if I were not so much accustomed to

read novels, I should, doubtless, be more interested by it than I confess I have been. This fault is probably more mine, than that of the author; but either novel writers have exhausted their invention, or I have lost some of my sensibility, for nothing now excites me as it used to do. The sorrows that once almost broke my heart, now rouse my laughter. Mrs. Radcliffe's style alone does not weary me;—I forgive the endless repetitions about setting suns, and rising moons, in favour of the dark and time worn turrets, where the hope of meeting a ghost keeps alive my interest. The pathetic and imaginary distresses of sickly, enervating sensibility, attracted me only while they were new. When my heroine sighs, I begin to skip a few leaves, because I dread to meet in them sentiment which ends in nothing; and when my hero begins to con-

template the charms of nature, the book falls from my hands, for I know we are coming to a love confession."

A smile played on the countenance of the Scotchman, but he remained silent.

"Indeed," said Mr. Seymour, laughing, "you have read romances in a most improvident way, since you know as well what is to befall the people you read of, as the person who wrote their history. I do not in the least wonder that you should so quickly weary of 'Self Indulgence,' even if you were not *blazé* upon love and nonsense in general, as there is more of both in that work than could reasonably be expected in two small volumes. It is a bad imitation of the French romances, with a dash of the German horrors; however, it will be read with pleasure by all genuine novel readers, to whom the feelings will not appear exaggerated, nor the heroism exalted and unnatural, and

it may possibly be approved of by graver people, as bearing the stamp of no common mind, and being one of the few novels in the English language, written with taste and elegance, as well as genius."

"You have contrived to praise and ridicule this novel so completely in the same breath," said Mr. M'Donald, "that I am curious to read it. Is the story marvellous, because that is a quality I take to be indispensable in a work of imagination, the object of which is to excite the reader's interest?"

"I believe it is not very remarkable for the characteristic you prize so highly," replied Mr. Seymour; "you know things are vastly more extraordinary in books, than they ever were in real life."

"Pardon me," said Mr. M'Donald, "if I differ from you there. Feelings may be heightened, and fictitious characters may be described

as suffering more in painful situations, than would take place in reality; I must say, however, that I never met with any facts in a novel more wonderful, or even so wonderful as what we hear of, and see happening before our eyes every day; but which no glowing description fixes in our mind."

Mr. Seymour was not inclined to give up his opinion, and Fanny observed, that in the pages of romance, there was frequently such a barbarous combination against some particular person, marked out by the writer as a victim, without anybody being able to tell exactly why, that it was impossible to suppose such things had ever in reality taken place.

"I agree in part of what you say," retorted Mr. M'Donald, "a novel writer often forms a cabal to oppress an individual, when two or three people could effect the purpose as well as two or three dozen; but that is the fault

which proceeds merely from the writer's want of ingenuity, and is no proof that people in real life are not oppressed to a degree equal to, if not beyond all that the fancy of romancers ever feigned."

"No body can doubt that," said Mr. Seymour. "The strong often oppress the weak. Some people torture others from sheer folly, and some from downright malice; but no solitary individual is possessed of despotic power over the peace and life of another, and a collection of people assembled from the four quarters of the globe, for the sole purpose of terrifying and ill using the hapless heroine, is at once unnatural and absurd."

"That is not common I grant you," replied Mr. M'Donald, "but I must still insist that it is not unnatural. We live in an age of scepticism. The vanity of man urges him to disbelieve that for which he cannot account. Thus are

historical facts doubted, and the phenomena of nature attempted to be explained by wise people who succeed only in puzzling us, and convincing us of their, and our own ignorance; thus are ancient records and legendary tales scoffed at——"

"On the contrary," eagerly interrupted Mr. Seymour, "I think we are ready enough implicitly to believe every thing that is *old enough*, unless you except the bible."

"If," said Mr. M'Donald, smiling, "you will promise to believe a legendary tale that is in my possession, it will convince you, and Miss Seymour, that in real life people have been more cruel and oppressive than the imaginary actors in romance were ever represented to be."

"Oh," exclaimed Fanny, her eyes brightening at the idea of new food for her fancy,

"how I should like to see it. Is it really true?"

"I did not see it happen," answered Mr. M'Donald, amused at her eagerness, "because it is nearly a hundred years since it took place; therefore all I can attest is, that every one in that part of Scotland in which I reside, knows the principal facts, although the details have extended little, if at all, beyond my own family. The sudden death of the young Archibald M'Donald, the last possessor of the estates of Herries and Benéra, caused great confusion in the family, as he had only distant relations. Many laid claim to the property, and when it finally devolved to me, I found, among title deeds, settlements, genealogies, and many other confused papers, the memoirs of which I am speaking, and which I will send you on my return to the Hebrides."

Miss Seymour thanked him very warmly, and the topic of novels was abandoned for more interesting and instructive ones. Some months after the departure of Mr. M'Donald, Mr. Seymour received a packet from Scotland, which proving to be the legend in question, no time was lost in perusing it. It was titled as follows.

A FAITHFUL COPY OF ALL THAT COULD BE DECIPHERED OF THE WRITINGS OF THE ILL USED LADY GRANGE, TAKEN BY HER FRIEND AND COUSIN, MARY CAMERON.

"MEMOIRS OF THE WRETCHED FLORA.

"Wretched indeed I am, but to whom shall I express my wretchedness? Here, in this lonely isle, shall I complain to the howling blast, and the furious wave of the ocean? Yes, to the wild storm, to the raging sea, will

I utter my lament! I will not shudder at their furious unkindness, for I have experienced the more pitiless nature of man. I will not tremble at their wrath, for what shall surpass his cruelty? The rage of my persecutors is greater than that of the jarring elements: the heart of my fellow beings is harder than the rock which walls round this dreary prison. God is merciful, and yet the being formed in his image delights in cruelty and oppression. Is this to be understood? But I arraign not the decrees of fate. I know that here below, the wicked sometimes triumph, but their 'laughter shall be turned to mourning.'

"Oh! that I were the only victim! On the cold earth would I lay me down, sleep in peace, and smile on destruction! But thou, my child!—This thought is too much. To desert thee, my helpless little one, was an act of atrocity heaven itself cannot pardon. To leave thee,

in this fearful place, among these savage people! If they could but understand me, I still would hope—and I will hope, always hope. Am not I innocent?—Am I not a mother, seeking to protect her wronged child, and shall I fail in such an attempt? I will endeavour to acquire the language of the islanders. They are fishermen—perhaps they go to other isles; and if so, escape may be possible. I will watch, pray, and put my confidence in heaven.

* * * * *

"Nine times have I watched the increasing and waning moon. I must have passed nine months here, and I may pass my life!—Dreadful idea!—To be shut out from the world, a helpless prisoner in the hands of my enemies. A lonely dweller of the rock, on whose sad ear the voice of affection and comfort sinks unheeded. Unfortunate that I am! Life is full of bitterness and woe, and for me there is no

peace, even where all things sleep and forgotten. No, I pray for life, for if I die, who will watch over my child?

"Blessed shade of my father, whose spirit in my wild dreams I could almost think I see, sailing rapidly past on the grey clouds, how wouldst thou mourn for thy child, thy oppressed, abandoned child, if the spirits of that world thou art gone to inhabit, could look upon the remote miseries of this wretched spot; and abandoned too by him, to whom thou gav'st her! By him who had sworn to love, cherish, and protect her. This is his love, this his protection.—O! well do I remember the bright and lovely day—the sun surely smiled in scorn that saw me become the wife of Lord Grange. His countenance was mild and venerable, his grey locks inspired respect, and his benevolent aspect, confidence. On his right hand stood the wily Benéra, his much loved brother.

Why did not heaven stamp on that treacherous brother's form the sure symptoms of his savage nature? Why was he not given a face from which all would have shrunk—a scowling eye, a fearful voice? He should have inspired terror, and repelled confidence. Far otherwise; his form impressed with the stamp of beauty; gentleness marked his demeanour, and grace his actions. His voice was harmonious as the Eolian harp, and his blue eyes looked sweetness and repose. He *seemed* like the 'innocent dove, but *was* the serpent under it.'

"The bride's maid advanced with smiles to meet me. Euphemia Buchanan was to become the wife of M'Donald, the laird of Benéra, she was lovely as the morn, and fresh as the flowers of spring. I embraced her with the cordiality of youthful friendship; yet did she stab me to the heart. It is hard to have trusted and been deceived, to have loved and

been forsaken; to have revered and be forced to despise; but to repay affection with treachery must be a yet harder lot—to do evil more sinful than to suffer. Surely it is forcing our nature, to betray the soul that rests in confidence upon us. Cruel Euphemia!—Perfidious Benéra! Sad and hopeless as my fate is, I would not change with you. Not for power, grandeur, and might, such as sovereigns the most despotic are said to possess, would I for one hour harbour your dark and malevolent spirits. No, I will suffer, and be still; for how much happier am I than you. And what have you gained by this unparalleled oppression; this cold-blooded barbarity? The lands of my deceived husband, of my injured boy! The earth that one day must cover your cold bodies, will it be the richer or the sweeter for this extortion? Will the green turf lie more lightly on your breasts, or the prayer of the

priest ascend the more certainly to heaven? Will not remorse poison present enjoyment? and to the future you dare not look. Oh! you may yet repent, and be forgiven. Restore us to our country! Give back my child to his father! I, the being you have tortured, will pray for you. I will teach my infant to raise its first invocation to Almighty power in your behalf. Alas, ye hear not, stern, relentless beings!—On the dreadful night that saw me torn from every blessing of life, I supplicated and wept in vain. The voice of Benéra still sounds in my ears. How calmly, immoveably, he uttered words, that were to plunge a fellow-creature, a sister, in despair. 'Flora, strive not against fate. Resistance in the weak is folly. Flatter not yourself with hopes of escape, but fear not for your life.'

"'And my child's?'—I asked, with anxious terror.

" 'Your child too,' said he, in that unvarying tone which chilled my soul, 'will be safe where I shall place you both. In an unfrequented island, what is your child to me, more than another's?' Not a syllable more passed his lips, and from these words only could I guess at the fearful mystery of his conduct.

" Still I understand it not. My husband's wealth was not considerable enough to tempt any but the most needy to such foul acts; and Benéra is rich!—My soul sickens when I think of these wretched people; I cannot dwell on them. But you, my husband, my kind indulgent husband, how were you blinded?—What delusion, what magic could induce you to abandon your helpless wife and sinless babe? My brain turns round, for thought itself has no resting place.

* * * * *

" Escape, escape! Liberty, friends, home!

Oh! transporting idea, and can you be realized? I have seen a kind fisherman—he has promised to take me to his island; where, he says, are towns, and where therefore I may meet with protection. Excellent, amiable being, how hast thou raised me from the abyss of despair, to the bright sunshine of hope.—And shall I again behold you, land of my fathers, fair country of my birth, scene of my early days of happiness. Oh! how I long once more to gaze on the well known hills that guard my beloved home! And thou, beauteous landscape, wild, magnificent, and sublime! pardon, if at any time I have beheld thy awful grandeur with an abstracted mind; for now my whole heart returns to thee. I will forget that ever I had a husband—among my own kindred will I dwell, and rear my boy in the lovely spot where his mother was born. My countrymen, my friends, how does my heart yearn to embrace you!

How will you rejoice over your recovered Flora. And you, Euphemia, Benéra, fear not. Inhuman as you are, I am too happy to think of enmity. I cannot now trust you, but never will I hate a fellow mortal, or injure those I have loved. And you, lingering hours, press on your tardy march. Auspicious gloom, deepened into night, when darkness shall have veiled the earth, then shall Flora and her child quit this rugged and cheerless prison. Then shall we be free!—Blow softly, ye gentle winds; be calm, thou fearful deep; bear us gently over, for we are innocent and helpless. Man conspired to destroy, but the pitiless elements will save, for merciful is the Great God who rules them. The hour approaches, my boy sleeps, unconscious of his mother's pangs, insensible of the tears that bathe his rosy cheek. Happy ignorance! most blessed age! when no anxiety for the morrow affects the

tranquil pulse, or clouds the sunshine of the soul. I have been climbing to the summit of the rock that overhangs the bay where the only boat in this island is sheltered. It is the joint property of the fishermen of St. Kilda, and is kept with care. I saw nothing but the last rays of the setting sun trembling on the water. I watched the grey mists gathering, but still it was light. I implored each black cloud that passed me, to lend its friendly influence in darkening the atmosphere, but they dispersed and left it lighter than before. Oh, will this night never come?

"It is come—it is past! The morning mocks me with its cheerful light, for I am still a prisoner. Last night (oh! dreadful night of suspense and disappointment!) I walked round the little bay, until my weary limbs refused to support me. I lay down on the rock nearest

the sea, and thought each murmuring wave that broke at my feet, was my deliverer approaching. Sick with apprehension and fatigue, I closed my eyes, which I had wearied with straining on vacancy. The piercing night-air struck on my chest. The cold seized my child, who clung closer to my aching breast, mingling his faint moans with those of the ocean. Again I looked up; the moon was hid behind a cloud, all was dark and desolate. I shuddered as in vain I endeavoured to distinguish the nearest outline, my spirits sunk to the lowest ebb. Had I been alone I should have died; but feeble as I was, the duty of protecting my child, gave me at once the courage and the strength to endure! I pressed him to my heart, and with a feeling of desperation, I arose. I heard something—my soul was in my ear; I listened, and distinguished foot-

steps: I sprung forward with a wild cry of exultation, and sunk senseless in the arms of the fisherman. When I recovered, I was in the wretched hovel where I had been placed by my persecutors. The fisherman had kindled a fire, and was warming my trembling babe. I begged to go that moment, I assured him I was strong and well. He refused me—barbarous as he was! Yet he pitied me, he was not cruel. The tears stood in his eyes as he listened to me, and he replied 'Lady, I would sacrifice myself for you, but my wife and my children I cannot. I am poor: my fishing supports my family. The fishermen of this island say they have no right to prevent my taking you away, but that as they are paid for the care of you, they will let no one fish on their coasts, who is instrumental in depriving them of so great an advantage.'

"'Oh tell them,' said I, hastily, 'my friends

will pay them more than my enemies have done.'

"'They will not believe me,' replied the fisherman, 'and if I lose my trade, I shall see my little ones perish around me. Intrust your child to me, and it shall be delivered to your relations.'

"'No, no, I could not part with my child, unless I could put it into safe hands.'

"The fisherman was sorry for me, but I knew him not: if he retained the will to serve me, he might not have the power. His wife might treat my babe harshly. No, I could not consign him to so uncertain a fate. But I wrote by the fisherman to all my friends, and begged he would send the letters different ways, that some at least might reach them. I exhausted all my paper; I tore out the blank leaves of my bible to increase my stock. The kind fisherman gave me a knife, and some stripes of soft wood.

I will write on them. He has taken charge of my parcels—he has sailed. I watched his boat, until it became as a speck on the ocean, and then wholly disappeared. I returned thoughtful and sad—I will yet try to hope."

CHAPTER II.

"I HAVE spent five years in this ungenial place. This is my birthday. This day six years, I was loved, honoured, and respected. I had a husband, a home, friends, and relations. All are gone, I am swept from off the face of the earth, and no one remembereth me. I have enjoyed every comfort; I am cheerless and abandoned. I have basked in the rays of pleasure, but my light is gone out. It is become extinct, and eternal gloom weighs down my soul. I do not weep—tears are for fresh sor-

rows, for such as seek alleviation. My sorrows are not fresh, they will never be alleviated. My soul has fed on hope until none remains. The last solace of the wretched is denied me. 'When I looked for good, then evil came unto me; and when I waited for light, there came darkness.' The fisherman, who, four years ago, took charge of my letters, I have seen no more. Perhaps he is dead, or still more probable, he has deceived me. Misfortune has made me distrustful, yet every one does not delight in treachery.

"I have found a smooth wood, on which I write with a dye these islanders make. I can now teach my boy to read, without injuring my bible, the only printed thing I possess. I have learnt to make clothes of the coarse materials these people wear. I dress my boy in my own work; the habiliment is coarse, but the hand of affection wove it. Heaven is mer-

ciful; my child is vigorous, healthy, and intelligent. If he is spared me, he will one day overcome his enemies; and if I live to see him restored to the bosom of his country, I will not repine at having worn out my life in anxiety, oppression, and solitude. For him, the future excites my terror, but for myself I care not. Am I not with him? Oh! for what restless hours of misery did the first sound of his voice repay me! When his yet feeble organs lisped out my name, the horror of my dwelling vanished. For the first time since I was torn from my peaceful home, the voice of praise ascended from my heart to the throne of heaven. Yes, I will have confidence in him who is mighty to save! He will protect the widow and the orphan. And am not I more desolate than they? To the education of my child I will turn every thought, every talent: true, I know little, I have no books; but can I not

enlarge the understanding, ameliorate the heart, restrain the temper, strengthen the mind? For this I need no books, my boy will learn to think and act for himself. His piety will not be the mere forms of religion, but an invigorating principle. His mind will be without guile, 'untrammelled with the thoughts of other men.' O, Eternal Lord of heaven and earth, bless my endeavours for the welfare of my child! Have mercy upon us, for we will put our trust in thee!

* * * * *

"My soul is racked between hope and fear. Some manufacturers are come over to the island. They teach the woollen trade. At the first news of their arrival I flew to meet them. I thought every where out of this dreadful place I should meet friends. I examined the countenances of these people—they were frigid and insensible. I heard them bargain with a starving wretch about the price of some

worsted. I shuddered and turned away in despair. In the evening I asked for them, but they were gone. They left directions for winding worsted with some children. Unused to it, the little islanders were awkward; they applied to me, and as I wound their balls, I thought of writing another letter to my uncle, and covering it thus with worsted. At least it would go out of the island, and might fall into the hands of a benevolent being, who would send it according to the direction. My heart beat quick; I took my last sheet of paper, and hastily wrote where I was, and by whom placed. The worsted was quickly wound over it, and I gave it to a little girl, who was to take a certain number of balls to the manufacturers. As they came by again from the opposite side of the island, I wrote an account of my ill usage on a piece of wood, and presented it to them. They heard me with indifference. Some called me a cheat, others a lunatic. I

looked among their parcels of worsted, and recognised my ball. That ball is now in another country. Oh! may it reach my friends!

"Who is so wretched that he may not be worse? Vainly did I think whatever means removed me from the barren isle, where so many of my days began in sorrow to close in despondence, would be blessed. Alas! I have quitted that gloomy abode; but to be thrown further from hope, more distant from any place to which flight was practicable. I was on the brink of salvation: the cruel, relentless arm of Benéra plunged me deeper into woe. Yes, I have seen him. Can it be that I rejoiced in the sight of a fellow-creature with whom I associated feelings only of happiness that had vanished, days that were past, never to return? For a moment I forgot how cruelly he had injured me. For a moment, credulous as I was, I hoped even in him. The first tone of his

voice recalled all the horror of my dependance on an enemy. My letter in the worsted ball *had* reached my friends! The clan was aroused, and with imprecations against my husband and his brother, were preparing to seek me. Ere now the band of deliverers have reached the rugged shore of St. Kilda, but the hapless Flora has been carried thence, and whither, I know not. Seek on, my valiant friends! Droop not in the search of her who is injured. In the cause of valour ye were never faint hearted, and will ye be so in that of mercy? Lo! the poor desolate one stretcheth out her arms unto the ocean, and charges each passing cloud with her prayers and entreaties. Dark was the night, and raging the storm, when the followers of Benéra bore me and my boy to their vessel. The pale lightning shot its forked rays along the lurid heavens, and gleamed on the faces of the men,

catching at intervals the projecting rocks, and quivering in uncertain reflexions on the troubled deep. The tremendous thunder growled over our heads, and bursting at a little distance, reverberated along the shore and hollow cavities of the rocks with redoubled vehemence. 'Behold,' said I, 'how nature reprobates your crime! The thunder will protect the innocent and overwhelm the guilty!' The men stopped, seized with superstitious dread. I raised my arms to heaven, for I felt imploring the storm. They drew back. Another effort, thought I, and I am safe. Oh! what emotion shook my feeble frame! Benéra approached. 'Flora,' said he, sternly, 'I am not to be trifled with. Make but another attempt on the weak credulity of my men, and I will dash the child from the rock on which we stand, into the foaming abyss beneath us.' My boy was in his arms. I darted forward with ago-

nized velocity. I caught my child to my breast with supernatural strength. I made an effort to fly, but my trembling limbs bent under me, and, still clasping my boy, and shielding him in my arms, I fell at the feet of my enemy. I heard Benéra encourage his men, tell them that I was a maniac, and order them to carry me to the boat below. They were islanders, who spoke only Gaelic, and understood not the barbarous menace their Laird had addressed to me. They believed him; and, regardless of my cries, tore my child from my feeble grasp, and bore me to the vessel.

"The storm increased. We were in great danger. Benéra knew not fear, but I saw he thought himself lost. The cabin was full of water: I was taken on deck. All things were in confusion, and the breaking billows momentarily swept something out of the ship. I looked at Benéra. 'One grave,' said I, 'for the

oppressor and his victims. The ways of Providence are unsearchable!' Not less so is the heart of man. Benéra took my child, and lashed him to a part of the ship which was most secure. He tied him with care and gentleness. At this instant I saw in him but the preserver, the guardian of my child, and, seizing his hand, I pressed it to my lips with enthusiastic gratitude. Benéra shuddered, and shook off my tears that had fallen upon his hand, with disgust and abhorrence. As daylight became stronger, the sailors discovered whereabouts they were. They pointed out the coast of Scotland in the distance. I bent forward to fix my eager gaze on those loved shores. Too soon they faded from my view. The wind abated, the storm was hushed, and all nature seemed at rest. We shaped our course northward, and in three days an island broke on our sight, of greater magnitude than

St. Kilda, and of a less gloomy appearance. At a little distance it looked like a chain of irregular rocks of granite, presenting a bold front towards the east; as we turned the western point, it seemed shelving gradually to the shore. I heard the sailors talk of the sound of Hanis, and the island of Lewis. I know not which of them, or whether either of them is the name of the island where I now am.

"'This is a cheerful spot,' said Benéra, when we landed. 'The air is softer, and the earth more productive than at St. Kilda. Here neither fishermen nor manufacturers come. The people will not molest you, and they cannot assist you, if they would. No vessel approaches these shores, for they are the most dangerous in the Hebrides. There are unknown rocks and shifting quicksands. The storms, too, are sudden, and their

fury irresistible. There is no article of commerce here, that could tempt any one to brave them. Your relations will give over their search, for I have taken measures to mislead them with respect to your present abode. I shall keep my eye on them, and it is too much my interest to baffle their endeavours, to relax for a moment my vigilance. A clergyman visits, once a year, his parishioners in this isle. No attempt on his integrity would be successful; I recommend you, therefore, to make none.'

"'Integrity!' I repeated, with an emotion of contempt and indignation.

"'Yes, Flora,' continued Benéra, in a mild accent, 'integrity it is, in him, to obey his superiors, his benefactors.'

"'Such sophistry,' I replied, 'may suit a Catholic country, but in Scotland I expected not to hear it. Gratitude may impel us to be-

lieve our benefactors cannot err, and, consequently, we may blindly obey their mandates; but integrity, so far from requiring of us to bend our principles to those of our fellow mortals, calls loudly on us to judge for ourselves, and, having judged, to act. Is it from the man of God that you look for a sanction to oppression and treachery?'

"'It is more the interest of the minister to be passive than active,' returned Benéra, dryly, 'therefore he will not help you.'

"'Oh, Benéra!' I exclaimed, 'think more favourably of human nature. All are not swayed by interest. Surely there are benevolent beings on whose pure, unsullied souls no selfish worldly feeling has shed its baneful influence. O, yes, there are many such!' There was a momentary pause.

"I looked at my companion. He was standing against a projecting rock, his arms

folded, and his countenance indicative of the deepest despondency.

"'Enviable, happy creature!' murmured he. With a look of anguish he raised his hand to his forehead.

"'Are you ill?' I asked, with surprise.

"'And if I was, would Flora pity me?' he said, in a low, hollow tone.

"'Heaven is my witness, I pity all who suffer,' answered I.

"Benéra covered his face with his hands, and groaned heavily. We entered a cottage, not ill furnished, and which seemed prepared to receive us. He sunk on a chair, in silence.

"After a long pause, he suddenly started up, and exclaimed, 'Flora, give me your solemn promise, by all that you deem most sacred, to make no effort to reinstate yourself and child in the situation from which I have taken you,

and I will then remove you into England, where you may make friends for him, as an unprotected boy, and give him the education he will shortly require. I know I may depend on your promise, if once you give it me.'

"My feeble frame shook with agitation. I entreated he would give me a little time for reflection. He assented, and left me. My soul was harassed with contending emotions. I sought to do my duty by my child, and dreaded to be swayed by any feeling merely selfish. I reflected that what, in a moment of emotion, Benéra might be tempted to do in our favour, would not last; that supplies for the education of my child, or even for our bare existence, were precarious; and that, bound by my promise, I should never be able to better our condition. I revolted from a promise that sanctioned crime, and robbed my child of his birthright, and—I refused!

"I have been attempting to walk in this island, but the rocks are so fatiguing to climb with my boy in my arms, that I shall desist. One of my neighbours brought me some black dye, made from the yellow water iris. None of this plant grows here. I cannot therefore expect supplies: however, I will use this, and trust to chance for furnishing me with more writing materials. The paper and ink Benéra gave me I will reserve for letters home. I cling to the hope that the minister may be induced to forward them.

"I have been to my favourite rock that overhangs the cave of the ancient hermit, whose bones are still to be seen in the inner part, where he died, at the foot of the crucifix. On this rock I sit for hours, for it commands an extensive view of the world of waters, and involuntarily my eyes fix themselves in the eastern direction where the vessel of Benéra,

proudly breaking through the foaming surges, was lost to my anxious sight. Singular, incomprehensible being! He strove to depart in the night, and save me the agony of seeing myself abandoned; but it was stormy, and the pilot would not venture to sail until break of day. I saw them go. I could not comprehend the apathy with which the seamen prepared to depart. They were going *home*, yet no trace of pleasure played on their rough countenances. No thought of those they had left, and were so soon to see again, accelerated their tardy preparations. On their hardened brow indifference and indolence rested. I too was calm, for my heart was cold. I essayed to comprehend the words of Benéra, but they passed over a mind engrossed and weighed down by one only idea, and left no trace of their meaning. I saw that my oppressor feared for my brain. He asked me if I would have a female

attendant, and engaged to bring me one from Scotland. I shuddered at the idea of being in any way the cause of tearing a fellow creature from all that makes life desirable, to bury her with me. Yet, what a temptation! I resisted it. Heaven be praised! I resisted it. I shall sink to my grave without having raised an emotion of sorrow in the breast of another. I have wiped off the tear of anguish shed by my fellow sufferer, but never have I excited pain, or been cursed by the poor destitute.

* * * * *

"The minister has been here. I have seen him, and ceased to hope. My cruel brother, although harsh in act, was never so in word or manner. At least, never unnecessarily so—never brutal. This last time he seemed anxious to contribute to my comforts, and perhaps wished he had acted otherwise; but this man—oh, I love not to think of him. He eyed

me with suspicious severity. I shrunk from the unfeeling, distrustful glance; and turning to his wife, who accompanied him, dwelt on her milder face with more encouragement. I endeavoured to interest her, but she seemed to fear her husband, who watched us. I wrote a letter, and my garment not allowing of the possibility of concealment, I placed it on my head, and plaited my hair tight over it. Many a wild, tumultuous feeling throbbed in my breast, as I stood with the rest of the islanders among the ruins of the ancient chapel—for since the reform no church has been built here—and appeared to listen to the ceremony. I often attempted to attract the attention of the preacher's wife, but she looked straight forward, and would not heed me. I accompanied them to the boat when they were to depart. The high wind blew about my hair, and the letter fell from its place of concealment. The minis-

ter seized it, and with a Satanic smile threw it into the sea! His wife burst into tears. In her place, I should have done more than weep!

* * * * *

"This is the ninth time that summer has clothed this isle in green since Benéra left us. I have written nothing, for the soft wood in this place is scarce, and I have hoarded it all to teach reading and writing to my son. Yesterday, as we walked on the shore, I spied some planks that the sea had thrown up. I seized on them with delight: they will serve as memorials of me when all others fail; and soon all others will fail. My enfeebled frame bends to the earth. My soul is harassed by continual fears for my son. He knows our story, and I dread the time when I shall be unable to rein in his adventurous spirit. He enures himself to fatigue: he braves danger. He would con-

vince me that he has strength and perseverance to effect our escape. No, never can I consent to part from him. Ronald! my son, my only joy, abandon not your mother! The suffering Flora implores thee, be not more savage than our enemies! In vain thou hopest on every shore to meet a friend. Oh, hearken to thy mother—thy deserted mother! She had friends, relations, a name, a country, yet, in the hour of danger, who shielded her? If the ocean spares thee, expect not that man will extend the hand of protection. Young, poor, and unknown, even on the hospitable shores of Scotland, thou mayest perish. Oh! judge not of others by thy own benevolent nature. Few, indeed, are cruel and unjust as our oppressors, but fewer still are actively generous—amiably credulous. The world is cold and frigid: it gives rarely, for it is selfish: it confides not, for it has been often deceived.

"Wait but a few years. Fifteen I have passed in disappointment. I now hope release only for you. For what should *I* return to my country?—to walk as a ghost among my kindred—to wander among people who have forgotten me! The ties of my youth are broken asunder. To creation I have but one link. It is you, my son! And will you burst it? Will you break a heart which has long beat but for you?

"I am not selfish. I would not keep you here for ever, but wait until you are a little more powerful—a little more prudent.

* * * * *

"I am alone—I trace rough characters on my plank, and water them with my tears. My son leaves me often—some great design occupies his mind, which he will not reveal to me—Heaven knows I shrink from his confidence. I feel it is a plan of danger, and I tremble lest I

should not have power to avert it. I mark his meaning eye and proud step, with tearful exultation. I shudder even at the courage I admire. Sometimes with momentary enthusiasm I persuade myself, Heaven will protect such virtue, will bear him victoriously through all dangers. Alas! the delighted confidence vanishes at the cold touch of reason and reflection. It is but the fond illusion of a mother's love. Miracles I dare not expect even for my Ronald.

* * * * *

"I know it, this dreadful secret! He leaves me! He tempts the dangerous deep, and leaves his mother to die!—He has been constructing a boat, that, he says, will bear him safely over. He took me to see it. I gazed at it as I would have done on his coffin, yet I said nothing. I have no right to desire him not to attempt a scheme that may restore him to those rights

and honours, of which he has been unjustly deprived. My last breath shall be spent in a prayer for him. If he shall succeed, what will it matter though I die? I have no feeling for fresh misery, I am overcome; my son takes my torpor for acquiescence, and thanks me for it. Cruel Ronald!

"He is gone!—My soul is wearied with suffering; I have wept and prayed, but tears now fail me, and my wounded spirit refuses to rise above the earth. I would occupy myself, that my mind, abstracted from its anguish, may be enabled to bear the evils it dreads. The morning was fine—the sea is calm—the wild spirits of youth and hope animated my rash son. Ronald manœuvred his little bark with dexterity. Before he entered it, we prayed together at the foot of the rough cross, that the pious hand of some early christian raised many centuries back on the centre of the rock. My

lips moved with difficulty; my shuddering heart, fixed on my son, could not, at the instant he left me, ascend to God. Pardon! Merciful Creator, thou knowest my weakness, and will have compassion on it. Oh, visit not my offences on my son! Watch over and support him. Thou hast breathed into him the breath of life; oh, be merciful unto him and save him! —I have been to the sea. I thought I heard the wind rise; but, the waves are not agitated. All is at peace, save Flora, the forlorn, abandoned one. Oh, my son, my son, thou art in danger, and thy mother cannot help thee!—yet he is strong and active. If the current was powerful, did he not promise to return? Oh, Ronald! thy sad mother's glory! wilt thou not be spared to her?—God! what do I hear, a sweeping blast, that denotes a storm! I cannot write. Along the shore I will watch the

rising wind, and call on the mercy of Him who raises it."

* * * * *

The foregoing is a correct copy of all that could be found of Lady Grange's writings. It was a very few days after the last had been written, that I arrived with my husband and brother, and their followers, in the Isle of Hanis, whither we had at last discovered she had been taken.

On landing we were much alarmed by not seeing her. The islanders, however, quieted our apprehensions by pointing out the lady's cottage, and assuring us she was there. We approached the house, which wore an air of comfort from the thick planted shrubs close round it, but there was a stillness in every thing, that was awful and deathlike. We entered the cottage, but saw no one. One of

the islanders preceded us, and we heard him say, "Lady, your friends are come." We did not wait for an answer, but rushed into the room.

Flora was sitting on the floor, her arms crossed on her breast, and her long black hair falling unconfined to the ground. She did not move at our approach, but looked up with a dreadful vacuity of countenance: her cheek was colourless, but her wild dark eyes glared with painful brilliancy. We spoke to her, we caressed her in vain—we attempted to raise her—she struggled with sudden energy, and clinging to the feet of a couch close to her, laid her head on it with a moan so deep and despairing, it froze our blood. My husband and brother were forming conjectures respecting what could have reduced Flora to this dreadful state—for me, I wept in silence. She seemed

to note my tears; fixing me for a moment, she said in a low, hollow voice, "Who is wretched besides me?"

"I am wretched for you, my cousin," I replied.

She closed her eyes, and pressed her hand on her forehead. Presently she arose with difficulty. She surveyed us carefully; no emotion played on her woefraught countenance, yet she seemed to know us. There was a dead silence which we feared to break. At last, raising a cloth that was hung over the couch, with a convulsive effort, she exclaimed, in an accent of desperation, "You are come too late." She held the cloth with one hand, and pointed with the other to a senseless form she had uncovered. It was a beautiful corpse of a boy almost arrived at manhood. No symptom of sickness had impaired the lovely contour of his features, or shrunk the symmetry

of his form. His eyes were closed, his countenance placid: his face was like white marble. It was the repose of death, and there was no mark of its fearful destruction.

We uttered an exclamation of sympathy. Flora smiled, but it was a smile of anguish. She sunk on the couch—my brother supported her.

"Bury us together," said she, faintly, and, laying her head on the corpse, a slight convulsion passed over her beautiful features, and she expired.

We did bury them together. On the rough monument raised over these hapless victims, my brother engraved the words of Job—"Here the prisoners rest together—they hear not the voice of the oppressor."

The islanders assisted us with unfeigned sorrow. They told us that, two days before our arrival, Ronald had left the isle, in a skiff

he had constructed. It split on a rock in a gale of wind, but at so short a distance from the isle that he had contrived to swim within sight of land. When exhausted and fainting, he floated on the surface of the water, and was cast on the beach, where his distracted mother was wandering. The inhabitants of Hanis carried him to the lady's house, where he recovered his senses, and spoke to her, but shortly after died. She had never since left the body, over which she sometimes prayed or raved, and sometimes remained quiet as when we found her; but was not to be prevailed upon to quit the couch whereon lay her son. We collected every relic of this much injured and amiable being. The planks of wood whereon she wrote, by burning the letters with a heated bar of iron, are in my brother's possession.

On our return to Scotland we found

M'Donald, the Laird of Benéra, dead. He had lost all his children in their infancy. Thus he gained little by his unparalleled oppression of one of the gentlest of her sex; but left, to a stranger, the lands which he had acquired by deceit and treachery.

"MARY CAMERON.

172—.

Miss Seymour, having finished reading the legendary tale, proceeded to Mr. M'Donald's letter. It was brief, simply stating the time when Lady Grange was carried off, by the order, or, at least with the connivance of her husband, who was one of the lords of session in Scotland. It continued: "Of the veracity of this dark history there can, alas! be no doubt. Many are now living who can vouch for it. It is a dreadful proof of my assertion, that no fictitious misery was ever equal to

that we meet with in life. I would not be supposed to insinuate that there are many such dreadful occurrences as that of which you have been reading. I hope it is a solitary instance of oppression and barbarity towards the innocent, so unprovoked. But, rest assured that 'there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy.' If we would be at the trouble of investigating circumstances that pass daily under our eyes, we should find them to be such as would, in a romance, be rejected as absurd and fabulous. Probability is a word every one squares according to their own experience, or peculiar range of thought. What one person looks upon as common, excites the wonder of another. For my part I have lived in the world until I afford a degree of credit to all things, and place implicit confidence in none."

"It is a visionary country, that of Scot-

land," said Mr. Seymour, who did not like to acknowledge himself foiled, and who, besides, was anxious to throw off the melancholy Lady Grange's tale inspired him with, by not believing it. "I remember Boswell, in his journal of a tour to the Hebrides, relates the heads of this story, and names the letter that reached the lady's friends, in a clue of yarn; but I concluded it to be an invention of his own. Such cruelty and mystery never can have existed so lately, and among civilized people. It cannot be true."

"I sincerely hope it is not," said Fanny, drying her eyes, and sighing as if she wished, in vain, to be incredulous.

THE END.

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